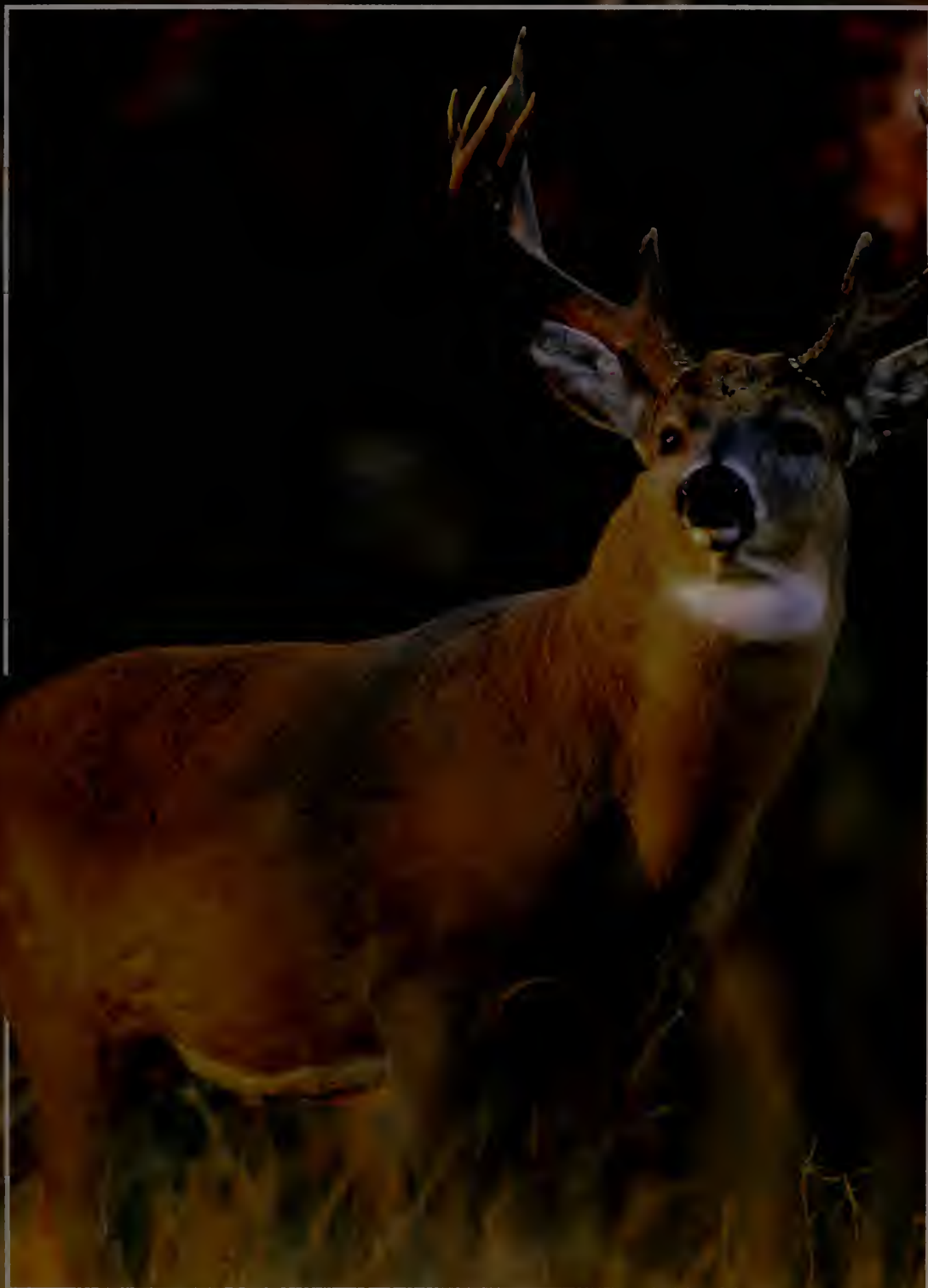


VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

SEPTEMBER 1998

ONE DOLLAR





Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr

In the July, 1998 issue of *Virginia Wildlife*, we published an article by Mr. David Hart entitled "Partners in Wildlife." It sings the praises of the work being done by many of Virginia's outdoors and conservation groups. It was our hope that the article would inspire people to become involved by joining one or more of the numerous groups and organizations that help to support hunting and/or fishing, and that are a vital part of protecting Virginia's wildlife and other natural resources.

Since publishing the article, we have heard from many of our readers to say that they are more than willing to roll up their sleeves to take on the challenge of getting involved. We also heard from many groups and organizations that were not referenced in the article, but who wanted to get the word out that they, too, play a big role in conserving our wildlife resources.

We certainly want to thank all the people who called or wrote us with their questions and concerns. We also very much appreciate hearing from the groups

and organizations that were not mentioned in the article. Our space limitations and the fact that Virginia is really blessed with lots of organizations working on behalf of our wildlife resources makes for a difficult situation when you start to make a list. It was truly not our intent to offend anyone by our omission, because the work you do is valued more than words can express.

Protecting our wildlife resources and assuring our long, respected heritage of hunting and fishing in the Commonwealth is a monumental task. It takes everyone's involvement and the road ahead is not smooth. Whether you belong to a national organization or a small group, we realize that carrying our mission into the 21st century means we all need your help. Together, we can make a difference for not only ourselves but for our children.

For further information, and to become involved with a national organization, or one of the many smaller outdoor groups, please write and tell us your

Partners in Wildlife Update



Lee Walker

specific areas of interest. We will do our best to point you in the right direction. We would also like to hear from the other groups and organizations not mentioned in the article so we may help spread the word that you are out there and growing.

Write to:

Editor

Virginia Wildlife

PO Box 11104

Richmond, VA 23230-1104

Web site:

www.dgif.state.va.us

Fax: 804/367-0488

Mission Statement

To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.

Commonwealth of Virginia
James S. Gilmore III, Governor

HUNTING & FISHING LICENSE FEE S

Subsidized this publication

Secretary of Natural Resources
John Paul Woodley, Jr.

Department of Game and
Inland Fisheries
William Woodfin, Director

Members of the Board

J. Carson Quarles, Roanoke
Chairman
Richard L. Corrigan, Arlington
Billy R. Cramer, Vienna
Charles H. Cunningham, Va. Beach
Dan R. McCoy, Big Stone Gap
Shirley M. Miles, Clifton
Kermit Reel, Charlottesville
Jack T. Shoosmith, Chester
Catharine Tucker, Richmond
Robert Wheeler, Crewe

Magazine Staff

Lee Walker, Editor
Mel White, Assistant Editor
Spike Knuth, Assistant Editor
Ron Messina, Assistant Editor
Emily Pels, Art Director
Carol Kushlak, Production Assistant
Staff Contributors: Kris Dougherty,
Rick Eades, David Norris, Lisa
Sausville

Color separations and printing by
Nittany Valley Offset, State College, PA.

Virginia Wildlife (ISSN 0042 6792) is published
monthly by the Public Information Section of the
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries,
Box 11104, 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond,
Virginia 23230-1104. Postage for periodicals paid at
Richmond, Virginia and additional entry offices.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Virginia
Wildlife*, P.O. Box 7477, Red Oak, Iowa 51591-0477.

Subscription department: 1-800-710-9369. Domestic
and foreign rates: one year, \$10.00; three years,
\$24.00; back issues \$1.00 each subject to availability.

Submission guidelines available upon request. The
Department accepts no responsibility for unsolicited
manuscripts, photographs or artwork. Permission to
reprint material from *Virginia Wildlife* must be
obtained from the writer, artist or photographer as
well as the editor.

Observations, conclusions and opinions expressed in
Virginia Wildlife are those of the authors and do not
necessarily reflect those of the members or staff of the
Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

©1998 Virginia Department of Game and Inland
Fisheries

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries shall
afford to all persons an equal access to Department
programs and facilities without regard to race, color,
religion, national origin, disability, sex or age. If you
believe that you have been discriminated against in
any program, activity or facility, please write to:
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries,
ATTN: Compliance Officer, 4010 West Broad Street,
P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, Virginia 23230-1104.



VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

Cover: Whitetail buck, photo by Bill Lea

Features

- 4 **Paddlemania** by Bruce Ingram
Virginia offers some of the best canoeing in the country and
there is nothing like it for a stimulating outdoor experience.
- 9 **Wetlands Management** by David Norris
An impressive move to restore wetlands across the Commonwealth is
benefiting not only wildlife but hunters and conservationists as well.
- 14 **The Mossy Creek Miracle** by King Montgomery
Read the Cinderella story of what it took to make this one-time
watering hole for cattle into Virginia's premier limestone spring
trout fishery.
- 17 **Northwest Landing and Northwest Rivers
Float and Fishing Guide** by Rick Eades and Kris Dougherty
Mapping your tidewater fishing trips.
- 27 **Calling All Wildlife Watchers** by Lisa Sausville
Sparrows, squirrels and swallows—learn how you can help map
Virginia's wildlife.

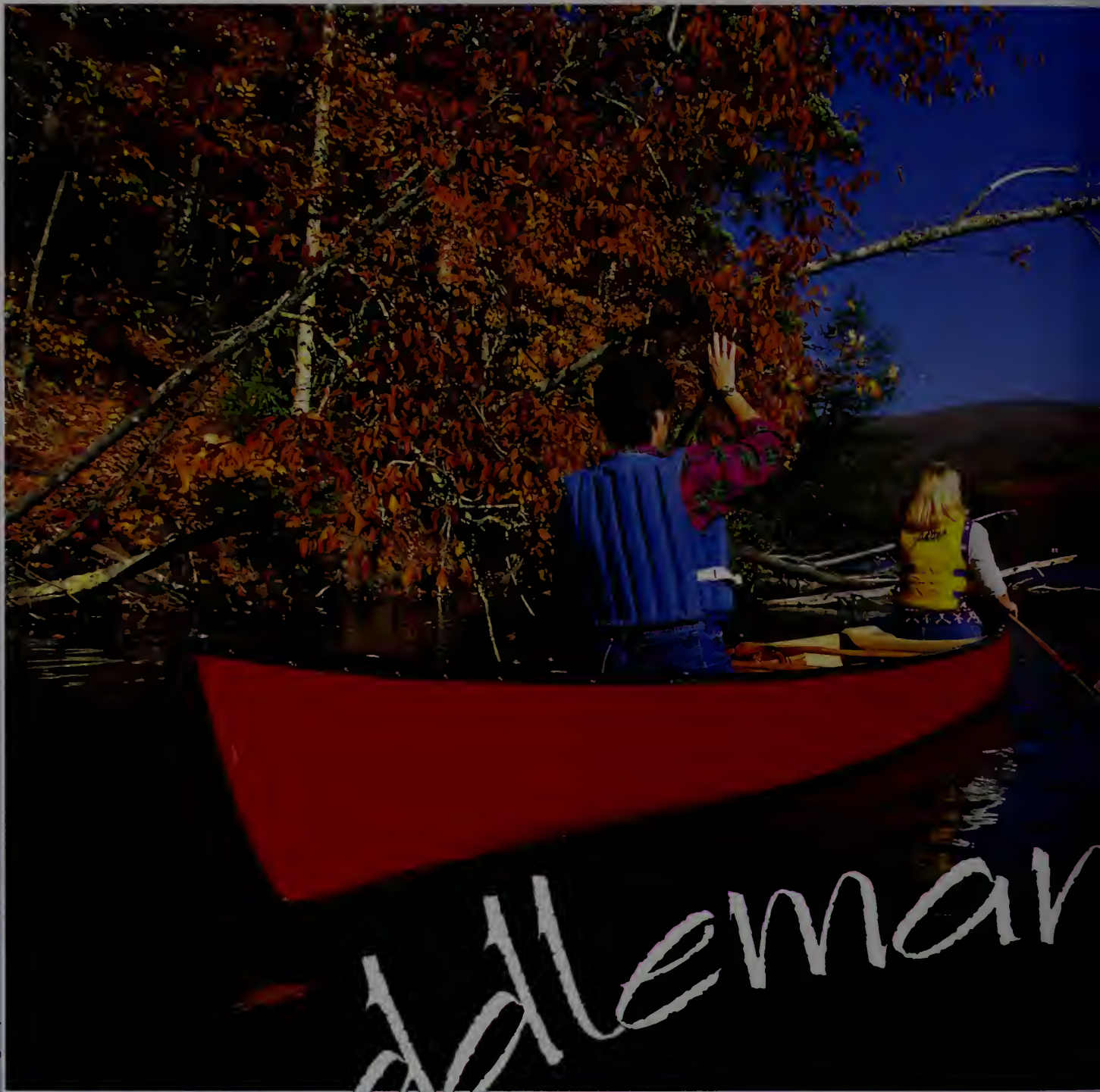
September Journal

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 32 Journal | 37 Recipes |
| 35 Naturally Wild | 38 September Afield |
| 36 On The Water | |

Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources

VOLUME 59

NUMBER 9



©Dwight Dyke

Good dilemma

***Finding your niche
as a canoeist
on Virginia's rivers.***



tomac, and the South Fork of the Shenandoah? Indeed, any of our so-called "minor" rivers, such as the Maury, Rapidan, Clinch, North Fork of the Shenandoah, and the North Fork of the Holston, would be the premier attraction in many states.

Once you have decided to enter the realm of the Virginia canoeist, you can go about finding your niche in this marvelous outdoor activity. To do so, you must determine your canoeing goals.

For example, some paddlers relish the thrill of white water above all else. They seek out isolated sections with Class III and IV rapids; these adventurers welcome the opportunity to venture forth on weekend excursions that may cover 20 or more miles. To these individuals, the desire to "conquer" a river is paramount. The white water that exists on the James above the fall line in Richmond draws these canoeists. Another popular trek is the Glasgow to Snowden float, which includes the famous Class III rapid Balcony Falls. Other likely excursions include the Maury River in the Goshen area during the spring and several sections of the New, below Claytor Lake Dam. Chief among these is the section from Ripplemead to Bluff City.

Others, like myself, view the river as a gateway to a host of outdoor pleasures. On any given trip, I will be carrying a camera, fishing gear and binoculars for watching wildlife. I make numerous stops in order to capture a majestic view, cast to a likely area, or identify an interesting warbler, vireo, or shorebird. An ideal trip for me is when I am able to shoot several rolls of film, catch and release several fine smallmouths, and identify several dozen different species of birds and wildlife.

Family members often come with me and their input is important, too. Indeed, I have learned that they have distinct preferences concerning what they want from a day on the water. For example, in between making casts, my 12-year-old son Mark loves to root around in a river for minnows and crayfish. Mark

practically demands that a trip have at least a few Class I rapids, so that we can "cruise real fast" through them. (I can hardly wait until he starts driving.) Conversely, my wife Elaine feels a river is a wonderful place to relax and enjoy the beauty of nature. She enjoys long shore lunches and sections lacking in major rapids. Involve your family members in the trip planning.

For paddlers like us, a five-mile journey is about the maximum for it may take six to eight hours to accomplish. And I usually opt for trips that sport nothing more than Class I to II rapids. For the most part, the James from Buchanan to Glasgow, the New from Claytor Lake Dam to Pembroke, and the South Fork from Innskeep to Front Royal offer plenty of potential trips for the intermediate canoeist who wants to participate in a number of outdoor activities.

Other individuals just welcome the opportunity to be on one of the state's many waterways. Many perceive a river as a respite from the

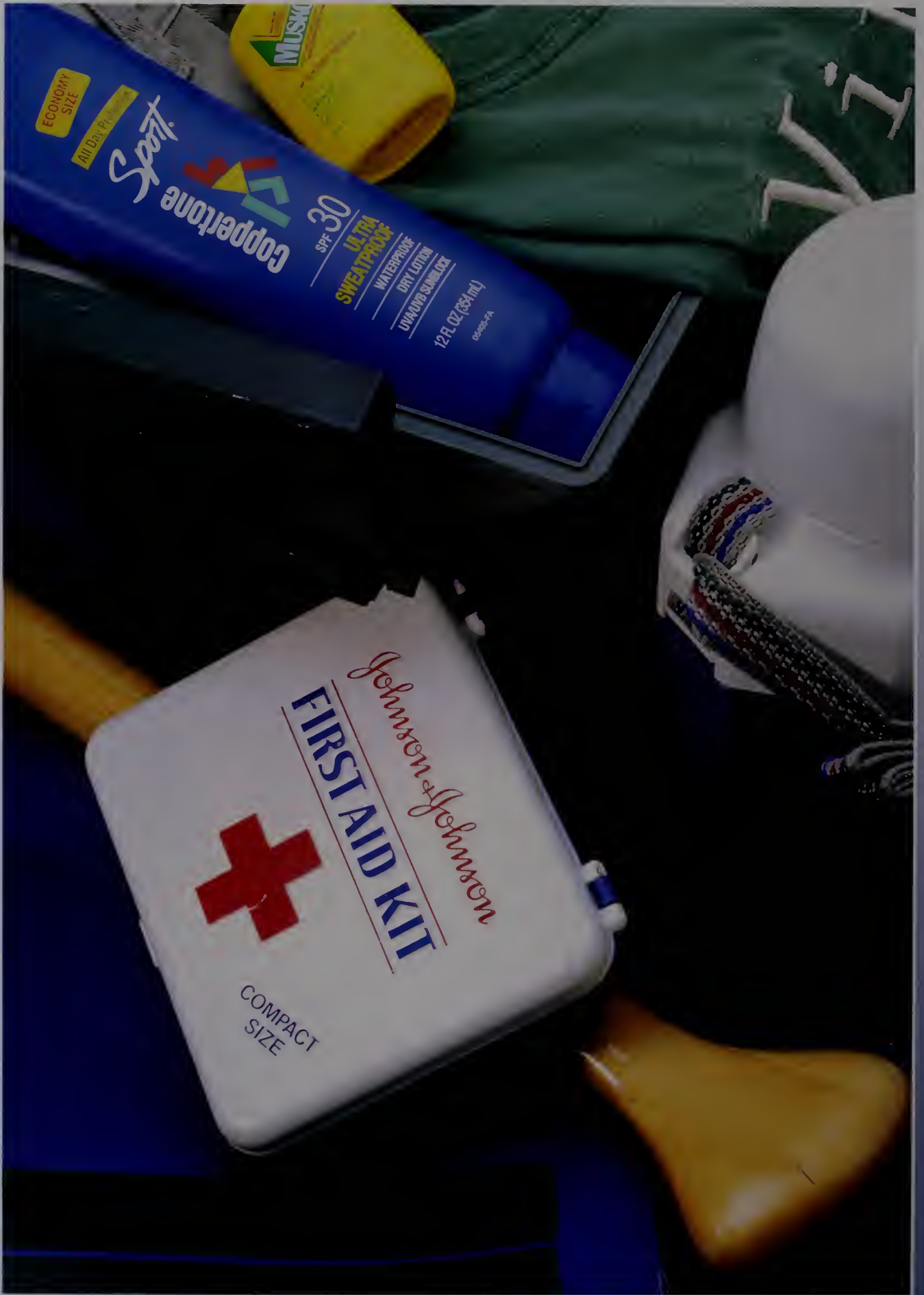


©Dwight Dyke

Whether you're young or old, canoeing is a great way to enjoy the outdoors. With the right equipment and a clear understanding of the importance of safety on the water, paddling Virginia's waterways can be a rewarding sport.

by Bruce Ingram

The Old Dominion boasts some of the best floatable rivers in the country. Can any state match the multitude of outdoor experiences which exist on our five major rivers: the James, New, Rappahannock, Po-



workaday world and as a place to float lazily along.

They may only want to leisurely cover eight or so miles during a day (generally one mile per hour is the pace) and prefer treks either lacking in rapids or hosting nothing more daunting than Class I's. The James, from Scottsville to Maidens, proffers many trips with those traits, as does virtually the entire length of the South Fork of the Shenandoah and the North Fork of the Holston.

To find a trip that is best suited for your skills and desires, careful trip planning is a must. Streams such as the James, New, Rappahannock, and South Fork of the Shenandoah all have outfitters along their banks. Before any junket, I call an outfitter and request current river conditions, weather and fishing reports, and recommended trips.

Even though I may have floated a particular section many times before, I also like to ask for detailed information on the trip I eventually select. By their very nature, rivers are constantly in transition and even the most placid of sections may have changed dramatically since my last visit.

Canoe liveries can supply you with all this information and also offer shuttling and rental services. I also recommend that you contact local tourism offices and request information on accommodations. After a day on a river nothing surpasses a dinner out and a stay at a bed and breakfast.

Many newcomers to this pastime worry about experiencing an accident while astream; actually, I think this is a concern all river goers constantly have, regardless of their skill

Virginia is blessed with not only great rivers for paddling, but also for fishing. Renowned for smallmouth bass — the James, New, Shenandoah, and Rappahannock are just a few of the rivers that anglers can tackle.



levels. The best way to not suffer a mishap is to learn how to avoid trouble in the first place. In addition to following the aforementioned trip planning tips, I always wear a personal flotation device whenever I am canoeing. Too many people use their PFDs as seat cushions.

A spare paddle, a water bailer,

and a dry box or bag full of extra clothes, food, water, sunscreen, bug spray, and first aid items should also be packed on all trips. I keep my camera and film in a waterproof Pelican case. Also in that case should be a stream map and the phone number of the canoe livery. I leave word with a family member or friend concerning what time I should arrive back home.

If you encounter rapids that appear to be beyond your skills a simple solution exists—portage around them. Although doing so is not the macho thing, it is the prudent course. Strainers (that is places which have partially submerged debris, such as trees and branches, where the river current sweeps through) should always be avoided. I have also portaged around my share of Class III rapids when stream conditions merited doing so.

Last summer, for instance, my wife and I and another couple, whom we did not know, arrived at about the same time at a particularly challenging rapid. I recommended that the couple portage around the rapid as Elaine and I were in the process of doing. The male member an-





two more reasons to join them. Virginia's rivers are true state treasures, and they are beckoning you now. □

Bruce Ingram is an avid outdoor writer from Virginia, who also shares his talents and love of writing with various other national publications.

an eddy
or still
water to
make your
exit from the
current. This will
also be the time
when you will be glad
you packed a dry box.

No other region in the country offers the diversity of rivers that Virginia does. I have found the canoe liveries across the state extremely professional and very safety conscious. The personnel at these establishments will be glad to give you tips on how to make the various canoe strokes and how to navigate your craft downstream.

Canoe clubs are common in many areas, and they welcome members of all different skill levels and also provide lessons. Many of these clubs are active in water quality and conservation issues as well—

For additional information, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries offers a series of float guides to Virginia's rivers, (Rappahannock, Maury, Shenandoah, Dan, Clinch, and James). To obtain copies write to the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104.

Classic Virginia Rivers, by Ed Grove, is also an excellent book that covers in detail many of the great canoeing and whitewater rivers in the state. The book can be found in major bookstores.

Virginia's River Atlases, published by The Virginia Canals & Navigation Society, is a great way to learn more about the rivers found throughout the Commonwealth. Atlases may be purchased by mail from: R.A. Davis, V.C. & N.S. Sales, Rt. 2, Box 254, Lexington, VA 24450.

nounced
that although he had never run the rapid before, it would be "a snap." Later, my spouse and I helped them retrieve their gear and paddles.

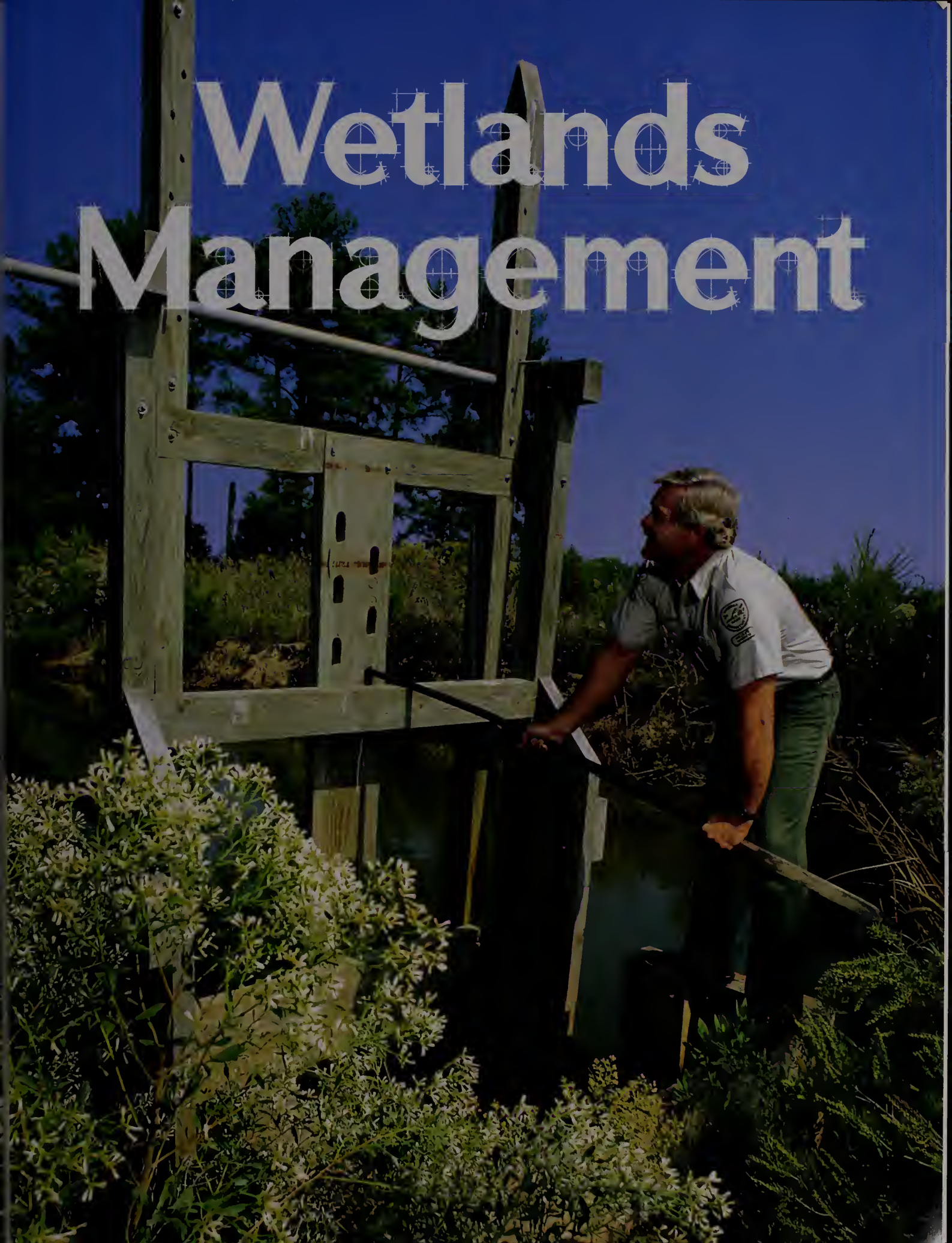
Sooner or later, many river runners will eventually capsize. If such an event occurs, float with your feet downstream (so as to protect your head and chest cavity) and look for




©Dwight Dyke

©Dwight Dyke

Wetlands Management





by David Norris

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) is aggressively restoring wetlands on public lands in Virginia.

Restoration of these wetland areas will provide wintering, nesting, and staging habitat for many species of migratory wildlife, including waterfowl. However, non-migratory species of wildlife also use wetlands. Many people have heard of the monster 12-pointer that sleeps with one foot in the marsh to better escape the hounds, or the wily gobbler with webbed feet who feeds on acorns in seasonally wet forests. Wetlands also provide homes for many less well-known species, including newts, frogs and toads, which are vital parts of the system.

With the support of partners like Ducks Unlimited (DU), the United States Fish and Wildlife Services' Partners for Wildlife Program (PFW), the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (NAWCC), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Virginia Power, VDGIF has restored or enhanced over 925 acres on eight VDGIF managed areas during the last three years. A variety of methods are used in restoring wetlands. Typically, an area which was historically wet and has been made less wet by man's activities, is desirable. A few of man's activities include ditches, drains, or tiles that move water from a site, allowing the building of homes, farming or grazing. To restore the site, the draining mechanism must be stopped. This can be accomplished by filling the ditch, or breaking the tile system. A water control structure is then installed so the water level can be managed to mimic normal flood events and encourage the growth of natural wetland vegetation, or allow drainage of the area so food crops can be planted.

The following is a listing of VDGIF managed areas where these types of construction activities have occurred.

Hog Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is an impressive system of wetlands consisting of both natural tidal marshes and diked impoundments managed for wildlife. Over 600 acres of impoundments have been enhanced by the replacement of five unusable tidal water control structures, installation of five new water control structures, and a combination of spraying/burning of over three hundred acres of phragmites (which is an

invasive plant to wetlands). The existing impoundments have also been ditched to enhance draining and filling of the impoundments with water for management of na-

tive and planted vegetation. Partial funding for these projects was provided by Ducks Unlimited and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Waterfowl hunting is allowed on a strictly controlled basis. Drawings are held in mid-October.

Princess Anne WMA, Whitehurst Tract is best known for fabulous dove hunting. However, the area has tremendous potential for wetland wildlife habitat. In 1996, 40 acres of wetland impoundments were constructed on what was previously corn fields. In the first year of flooding, over 2000 waterfowl were seen feeding on the area in a single day. Construction is currently underway on an additional 40 acres of wetland habitat. Due to the extreme flat nature of the site, restoration consists of placing a low level dike completely around farm fields and pumping water into the impoundments each fall. The area is managed both for natural vegetation and planted wildlife foods. Partners on these projects include the North American Waterfowl Conservation Council, Ducks Unlimited, The United States Army Corps of Engineers and The United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Hunting will be allowed in the future on a strictly controlled basis. Drawings will be held each year.

James River WMA has 12 acres of restored wetlands located directly adjacent to the James River in Nelson County. Three small impoundments were constructed in 1997 and are being managed for migratory waterfowl habitat. Restoration consisted of placing low level berms across ditched farm fields to hold water. Three water control structures were also installed to allow management of water levels. Typical management is for natural vegetation. Ducks Unlimited helped fund this project. Hunting is allowed on the site.

C.F. Phelps WMA, over 4,500 acres in size, has a new 30-acre wetland restoration project located next to the Rappahannock River in Fauquier County. The area was restored by blocking three ditches and constructing a low level dike across



Lee Walker



Lee Walker



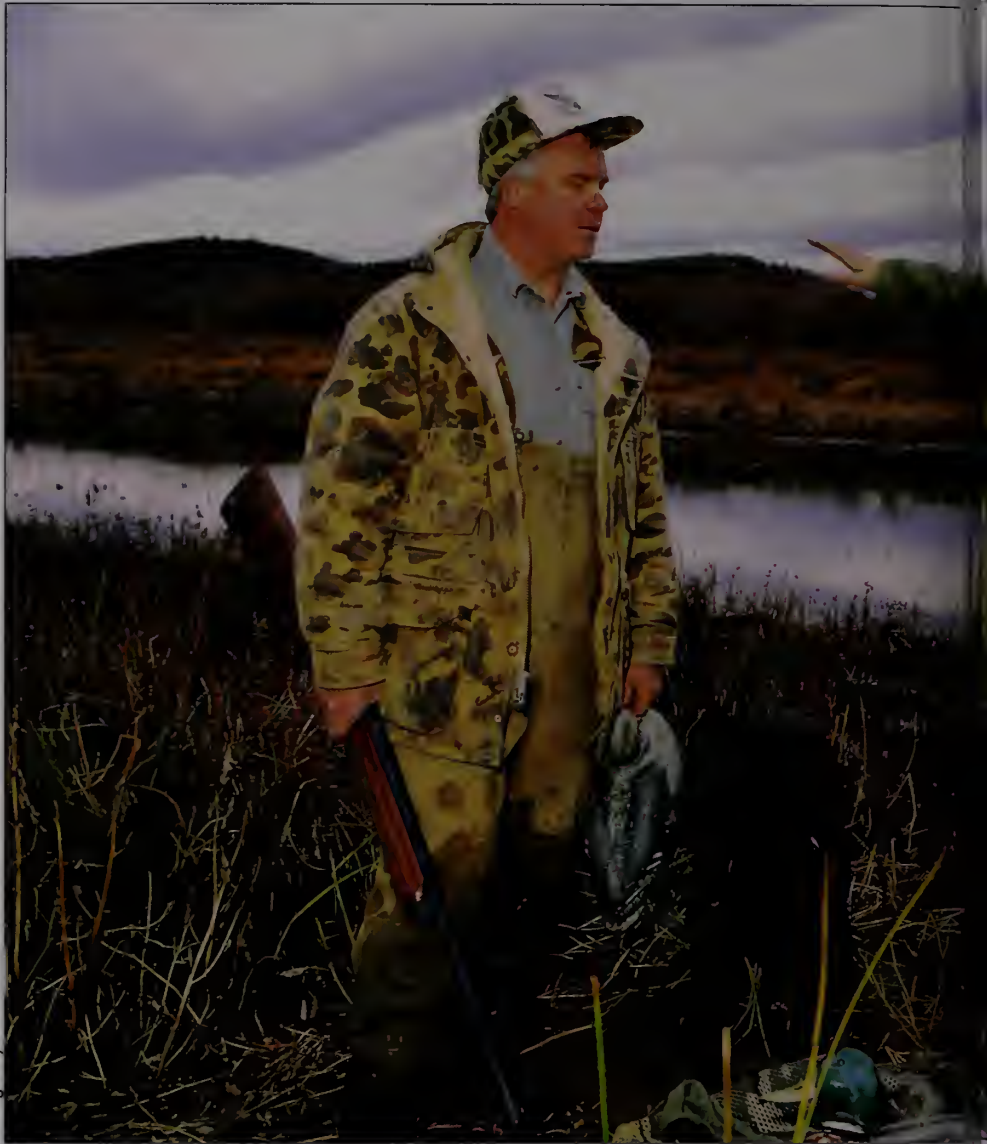
David Norris

(Page 9) Wildlife biologist for special projects, Mac Walls, monitors water levels with the aid of a water control structure at Hog Island WMA in Surry County. Hog Island WMA has over 600 acres of enhanced wetlands. Wildlife biologist's goals are to create prime habitat that will benefit all wildlife. Management tools like the installation of water control structures, burning and aerial spraying are commonly used to meet these goals. (Above) Wildlife biologists Phil West and Tony Castille.

an existing farm field. In its maiden year, hundreds of waterfowl were seen feeding in the impoundment on several occasions. Species have included mallards, teal, wood ducks, ring-neck ducks, Canada geese, and tundra swans. The area has also had good numbers of shore-birds and wading birds. Ducks Unlimited was a contributing partner on this project. Hunting will be allowed on a strictly controlled basis.

Powhatan WMA, located just 25 miles west of Richmond, now has a wetland restoration project managed for wildlife. The 25 acre impoundment was developed during the summer of 1997 by installing two water control structures in an existing dike. The area can now be managed by raising and lowering water levels to encourage the growth of wildlife friendly vegetation. Ducks Unlimited contributed to the completion of this project. Hunting is allowed on a first come, first serve basis; walk-ins only.

Dick Cross WMA serves as a waterfowl refuge in south central Virginia. Over 175 acres of wetland impoundments are managed for wetland wildlife on the area, 50 of which have been constructed recently. An additional 20 acres will be constructed this year through an agreement with the Virginia Department of



©Dwight Dyke



David Norris

Located at James River WMA, this field is typical of the type of land that is restored as wetlands.



David Norris

In less than two weeks, with the use of limited equipment and manpower, this field will be restored.



Transportation. Restoration has consisted of plugging ditches, repairing dilapidated dams, and removing soil from an area to lower the contour elevations. Partners on this project have included the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited and The Virginia Department of Transportation. Waterfowl hunting is not allowed on the refuge. The area is primarily managed for native vegetation, which serves as a food source for migratory and wintering waterfowl.

The Clover Power Station, although not public land, has restored over 150 acres of wetlands on their property, which is managed by VDGIF as a wildlife refuge. The site is not open to hunting or public access, but has tremendous value as a wintering and staging area for migrating wildlife. Partners included Clover Power Station, Virginia Power, Old Dominion Electric Co-operative and Ducks Unlimited.

Although only 2 acres, the *George Washington National Forest, Evans Tract* will provide a host of benefits to wetland wildlife in Virginia's

Wildlife biologist Jay Jefferies talks with a local hunter who has come to the newly created wetlands at James River WMA to take advantage of the improved hunting opportunities.



©Scotty Lovett

western mountains. The site was constructed this summer utilizing personnel and equipment from the Virginia Department of Forestry, the National Forest, and VDGIF. Hunting will be allowed at the discretion of the National Forest. Management will be for natural vegetation.

For more information on these or other VDGIF managed wetland areas, please contact your local DGIF office. □

David Norris is a wetland habitat biologist with the Department's Wildlife Division.



David Norris

The Malsam Terracer is a special piece of equipment that allows DGIF biologists to quickly build low level dikes for holding water.



David Norris

Many areas, like this restoration project on the Whitehurst Tract in Virginia Beach, can be expected in the near future both on public and private land.

*Conservationists
and farmers
have brought
back one of
Virginia's most
pristine streams.*

Mossy Creek,
a scenic pasture stream in Augusta
and Rockingham counties in the
Shenandoah Valley, is a limestone
spring creek that is rich in nutrients,
and is home to numerous healthy
and large brown and rainbow trout.
It also has an interesting history
from its beginning as a watering
trough for cattle to its current status
as a Special Regulation Trophy Trout
Stream. The creek is privately-
owned from its spring-fed sources
near Mt. Solon, north of Churchville,
to its confluence almost 10 miles
later with the North River, near

Bridgewater. Mossy Creek is unique
in many wonderful ways, but per-
haps its most endearing characteris-
tic is that three miles of it in Augusta
County are open to the public for fly
fishing only. This is possible because
of a cooperative effort between the
landowners, Trout Unlimited (TU),
and the Department of Game and
Inland Fisheries (DGIF) that began
over 20 years ago. Since its birth as a
trophy trout stream, Mossy has been
watched over by the Massanutten,
Rapidan, and Northern Virginia
Chapters of Trout Unlimited. An-
other several miles of this vibrant
creek are available to public anglers
who hire one of the several guides
with fishing rights on the private
stretches of the stream.



The Mossy

by King Montgomery



How It All Began

In the fall of 1974, the Shenandoah Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited decided to survey Augusta County's limestone streams, and select one as a project to restore to a level that would provide habitat for trout. Mossy Creek, then a simple meadow stream serving as a watering hole for cattle, was chosen as the site with the most potential.

By the spring of 1976, three landowners along the creek entered an agreement with TU that allowed chapter members to do research near the spring headwaters. While the quality of the water could be good

enough for trout, sampling revealed that none actually lived in the stream. The creek and its riparian zone would need a serious face-lift before the system could sustain a meaningful population of trout.

As TU members worked on improving the habitat of the stream by planting vegetation along the banks to hinder erosion, and by building fences to keep cattle off of the banks and out of the river, DGIF stocked 1,500 one and a half-inch brown trout. Browns were chosen because of their tolerance to higher temperatures and resistance to pollution.

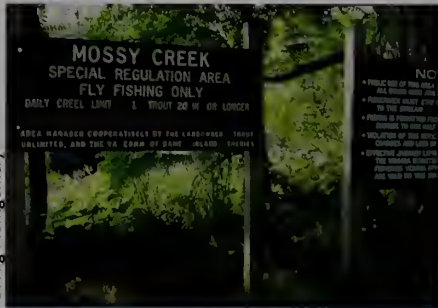
In October 1976, electrofishing sampling by DGIF and TU turned up 15 browns, some up to seven inches in length; a very high growth rate in such a short period of time, made possible by the richness of the stream's ecosystem. By interpolating the sampling data, DGIF fisheries biologist Larry Mohn, who still monitors the stream today, estimated that about 50 trout resided in Mossy Creek. This survival rate of about 1 in 30 closely matches that



©Kin, Montgomery

Creek Miracle

Mossy Creek is a classic farm meadow limestone spring creek. It is known for clear water, a healthy profusion of aquatic plants and big trout like this rainbow, caught by Amy Cerelli.



Mossy Creek Special Regulations

You will need a special permit from the landowners and DGIF to fish the public-access section. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to VDGIF, Verona Office, P.O. Box 996, Verona, VA 24482. The permit, good for a year, is free.

Other Regulations:

- Fly fishing only
- Single hook flies, no bait in possession
- No wading in streambed
- Stay near streambed
- No camping or fires
- Parking in designated areas only
- Creel limit is one fish per day over 20 inches

and an occasional rock bass. Rainbow trout fingerlings have been stocked in recent years, and share Mossy with the browns.

The Mossy Creek fishery is modeled after some of the famous limestone spring creeks in the Cumberland Valley of Pennsylvania, such as Big Spring and Letort, to name a few. Most of these quality streams are open all year for fly fishing only, factors that help ensure a quality angling experience where the needs of the environment and respect for private property are foremost. Streams are either catch-and-release or have a very modest creel limit. On Mossy Creek, anglers may keep one trout a day over 20 inches. Few, if any fly anglers take advantage of this opportunity and most, after a quick snapshot or two, gently release the fish back to the stream. Many of the fish are caught more than once.

Mossy Creek, like most spring creeks, is very fertile, usually runs clear, and maintains water temperatures conducive to trout's needs all year; from 50 to 65°F. Its fertility guarantees a rich aquatic insect population, and the fish have mayflies, caddisflies, stoneflies, tricos, and midges to eat. Add small fish and

the numerous damselflies, grasshoppers, beetles, ants, and other terrestrial insects that fall or are blown into the water and the trout are well-fed, particularly in the spring through fall. This makes them harder and more challenging to catch. Those fingerlings that survive their first year in the creek have grown larger and become as wild and wary as if they had been born in the stream.

Tackle for Tough Trout

Mossy Creek is only 10 to 20 feet wide, so you don't need a long cast to reach the far bank, but fishing directly across stream is usually not an option because of the tricky currents. There will usually be at least three distinct current flows: one by the near bank, another in the creek's middle, and the other along the far side. Long delicate casts up or downstream are often needed to accurately and quietly present the fly du jour to Mossy's well-fed and easily-spooked trout. And once the fly is presented, a long rod is needed to effectively mend the line and to keep the offering out of the watercress, elodea, and other aquatic flora that grow in the creek.

Continued on page 25.



found in one and a half-inch fingerlings in a natural environment. A thousand six-inch brown trout were stocked a week later, and today we are all reaping the benefits of this unprecedented cooperation between landowners, TU anglers, and state fisheries officials. Paul Bugas, DGIF fisheries biologist, says some brook trout have been stocked, and the stream is also home to pearl dace, slimy sculpin, white suckers, fallfish, blacknose dace, American eels,



A good selection of dry flies and terrestrials will tempt Mossy Creek's trout like this big brown.

©Dwight Dyke



North Landing and Northwest Rivers

Float and Fishing Guide





©Dwight Dyke

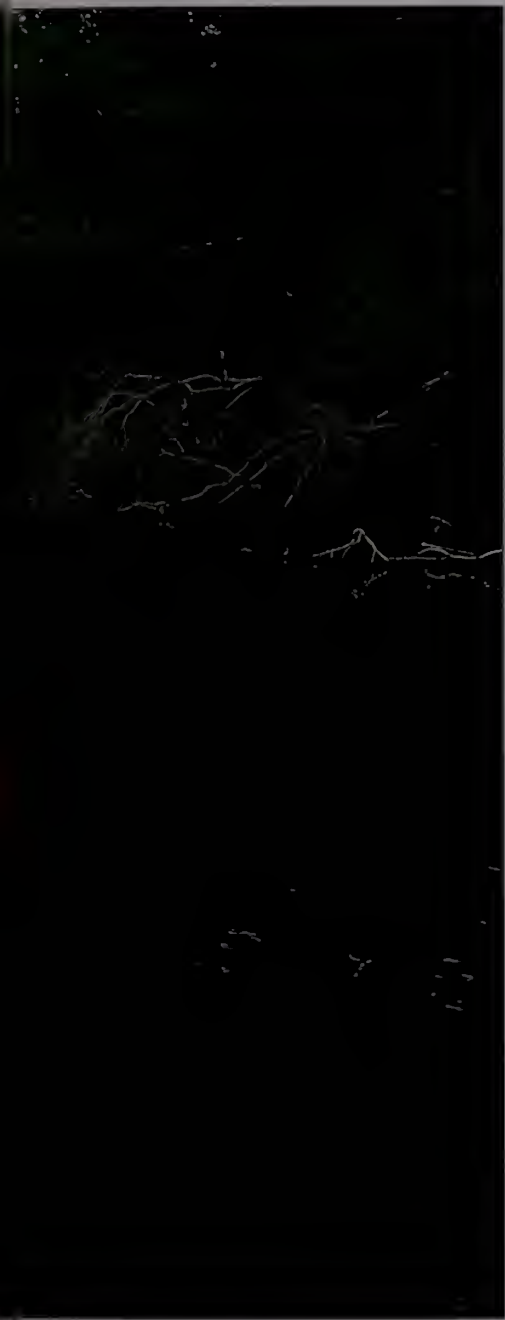
by Rick Eades
and Kris Dougherty

With the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean so close by and so prominent on maps of the Tidewater area of Virginia, it's understandable that many people might overlook the North Landing and Northwest Rivers when planning a fishing or boating excursion. Tucked away in southern

Virginia Beach and Chesapeake, these waters may not be familiar to most Virginians. Others, though, have discovered that these rivers have a lot to offer. While these two rivers are certainly small (or at least short in terms of river mileage) compared to the James, Rappahannock, New, and other Virginia rivers, there's still plenty of water to explore, especially by canoe.

Because the North Landing and Northwest Rivers lay completely below the fall line, they do not have

rapids or fast water like most other Virginia rivers. That means you can't just float downstream with the current from one put-in to another—you have to do a little work (which really isn't such a bad thing). An advantage with canoeing these two rivers is you don't have to take two vehicles or paddle upriver fighting the current to get back to where you started. Pick one of the public boat ramps or canoe access sites shown on the map, paddle or motor around all you want, upstream or down-



Located within one of the fastest growing cities in Virginia, North Landing and Northwest rivers can provide a true wilderness challenge.

stream, and return to where you started. No shuttling of vehicles is required! One thing to remember—since upstream and downstream are not always that obvious (wind tides can actually push water upriver), there's some chance of getting disoriented, particularly if you go exploring back in the marshes and swamps.

The North Landing and Northwest Rivers may be close in proximity and eventually join in North Carolina, but there are plenty of differences between the two. North Landing, (the larger of the two), contains part of the Intracoastal Waterway, so there's a deep channel for large boats. You can follow the Waterway north to the Elizabeth River, and ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay. Heading south takes you into Currituck Sound in North Carolina. The river has extensive marshes around it with several small tributary streams, particularly along the western shore. This gives the canoeist plenty of water to explore away from the big boats on the river. The river can be somewhat salty at times, particularly when southerly breezes push water upriver from the Sound. West Neck Creek, one of the larger tributaries, also can be salty due to a man-made canal connecting it to the Lynnhaven River to the north. West shore tributaries are typically less salty.

The Northwest River, draining eastward from the Great Dismal Swamp, is very dark in color and acidic (commonly referred to as blackwater). Instead of marshes, the shoreline is lined with cypress trees and deep, dark swamps. As with the North Landing River, there are plenty of small tributaries to explore and keep you out of the way of the bigger boats on the main river. While the Northwest does not have commercial boat traffic, there is no horsepower restriction on boats, so there are plenty of fast moving bass boats and water skiers around at times.

Much of the land surrounding the North Landing River is owned by the Nature Conservancy and protected from development. Wildlife is plentiful in this area, particularly

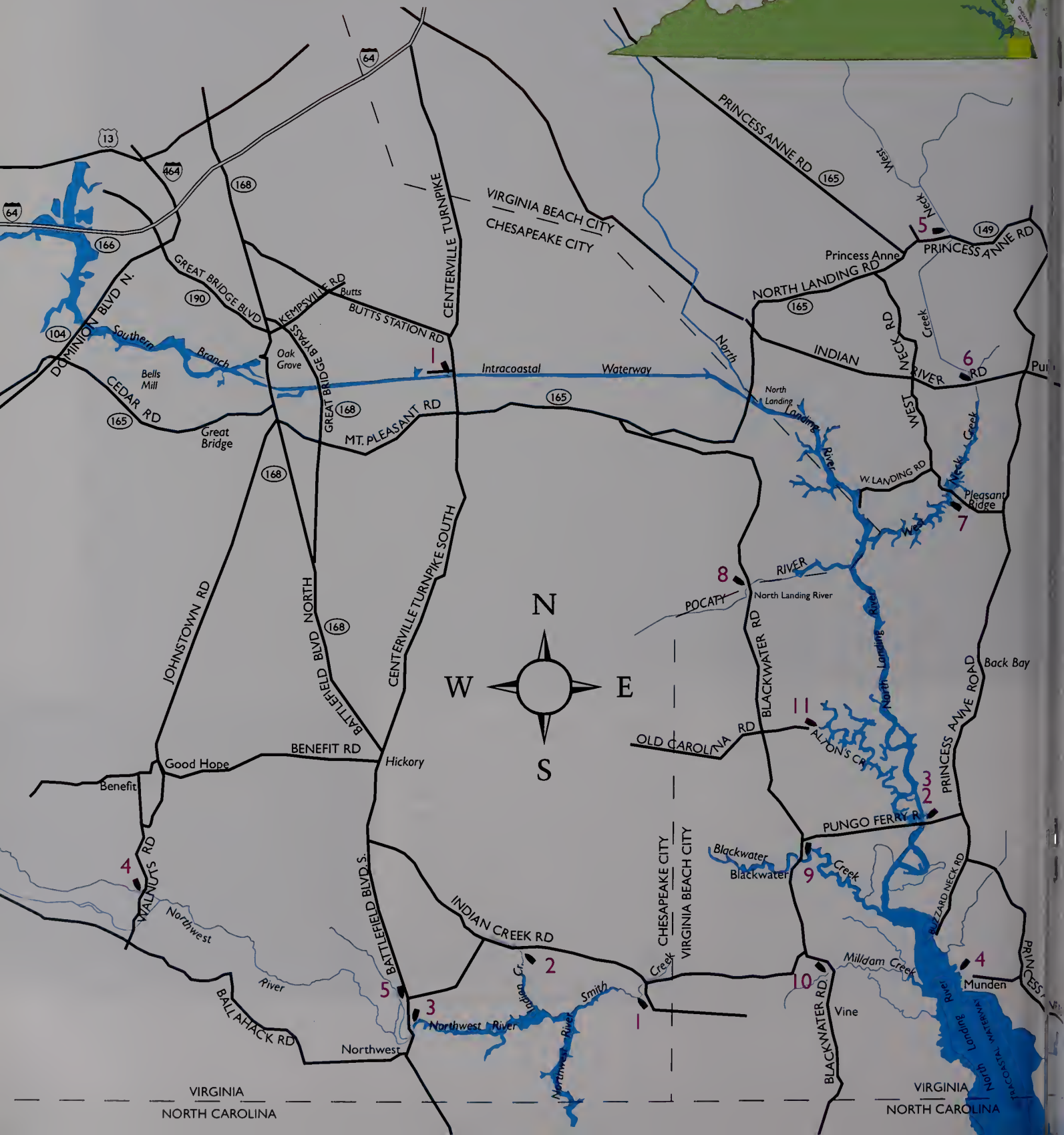
deer, so bring your binoculars. You might see a bear along the Northwest River up near the Great Dismal Swamp. Certainly you'll get to see a wide variety of birds, and yes, snakes. These two rivers are home to cottonmouths and canebrake rattlesnakes, so exercise caution. There are plenty of harmless water snakes as well, so don't get too upset if you see a snake on the water. Contrary to popular belief, not all snakes around water are water moccasins. The canebrake rattlesnake, a state endangered species, is fairly rare and terrestrial, so there's little likelihood of encountering one on the rivers.

Anglers will find a wide variety of fish in these waters, both freshwater and brackish. Common fish in the North Landing River include largemouth bass, bluegill, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, white perch, and white catfish. White catfish and white perch are more abundant in the main river, whereas the sunfish are more common in the tributaries. On the western shore, the Pocaty River is a good tributary stream for largemouth bass, bluegill, and pumpkinseed. On the east side, West Neck Creek is also a good spot for these species. Both of these streams produce some big bass. Anglers on the North Landing River are also enjoying the resurgence of the striped bass population along the Atlantic Coast. While trophy stripers are rare, smaller stripers (up to 10 pounds) have become fairly common in recent years at certain locations and times of the year.

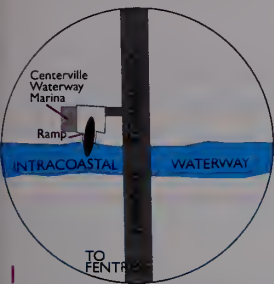


©M. L. Giovannetti

st Rivers



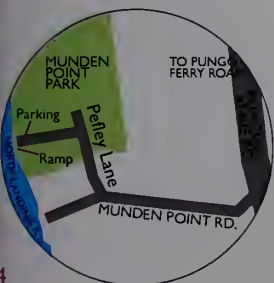
North Landing River



Centerville Waterway Marina
100 N. Centerville Turnpike
Chesapeake, VA (757) 482-1834
Ramp, gas, diesel, snacks, drinks



- 2&3
- Pungo Ferry Marina
2272 Old Pungo Ferry Rd.
Virginia Beach, VA
(757) 721-6569
Ramp, snacks, bait
 - Pungo Ferry
2300 Block Old Pungo Ferry Rd. (Dead end of road)
Virginia Beach, VA
Canoe put-in, limited parking



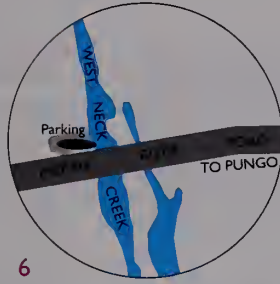
Munden Point Park
City of Virginia Beach Park
2001 Pefley Lane
Virginia Beach, VA
(757) 426-5296
Ramp, picnic facilities, closes sunset

West Neck Creek

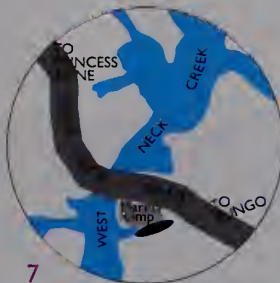


Dozier's Bridge
2500 Block Princess Anne Rd.
Virginia Beach, VA
Canoe put-in, limited parking

West Neck Creek

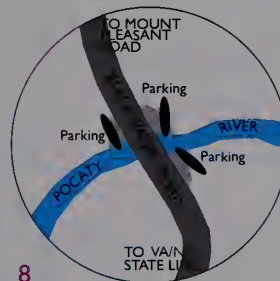


Speed's Bridge
2200 Block Indian River Rd.
Virginia Beach, VA
Canoe put-in, limited parking



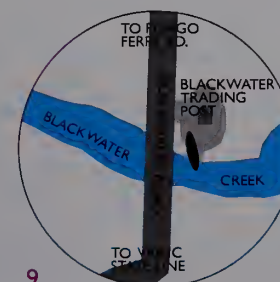
West Neck Marina
3985 West Neck Rd.
Virginia Beach, VA
Ramp, snacks, bait, ramp,
canoe put-in

Pocaty Creek



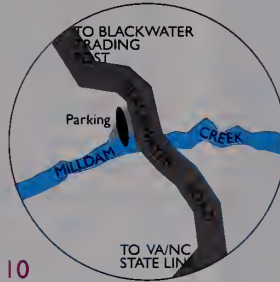
Pocaty Creek Bridge
4000 Block Blackwater Rd.
Virginia Beach, VA
Canoe put-in, small trailered
boats, limited parking

Blackwater Creek



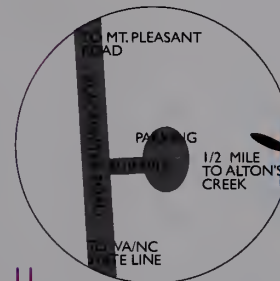
Blackwater Trading Post
5605 Blackwater Rd.
Virginia Beach, VA
(757) 421-2803
Ramp, Canoe put-in, snacks,
bait, fishing licenses

Milldam Creek



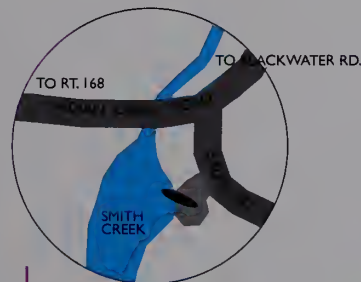
Milldam Creek
6100 Block Blackwater Rd.
Virginia Beach, VA
Canoe put-in

North Landing River Nature Preserve



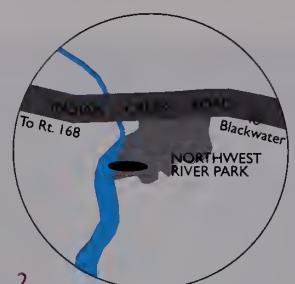
North Landing River Nature Preserve
4800 Block Blackwater Rd.
Virginia Beach, VA
1/2 mile hike from parking lot to
put in, canoe put-in.

Northwest River

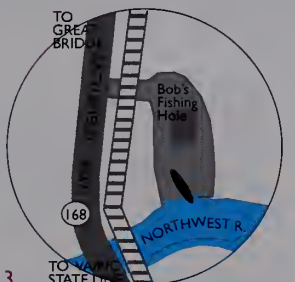


Northwest River Park
City of Chesapeake Park
Smith Creek Small Boat
Put-in Baum Rd., Chesapeake, VA
1/8 of a mile from the inter
section of Baum Rd. and Indian
Creek Rd. Canoes, small trailered
boats, limited parking, closes at sunset

Northwest River



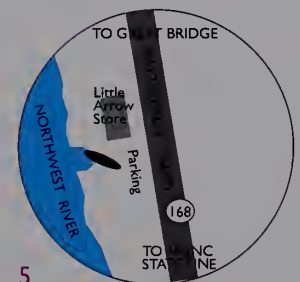
Northwest River Park
City of Chesapeake Park
Indian Creek Bridge
Canoe put-in, small trailered
boats, closes at sunset, limited
parking



Bob's Fishing Hole
4243 Battlefield Blvd. S.
Chesapeake, VA 23322
(757) 421-3362
Canoe put-in, ramp, snacks,
drinks, bait



Bunch Walnuts Bridge
3400 Block Bunch Walnuts Rd.
Chesapeake, VA
Canoes, small car topped boats,
very limited parking



Little Arrow Store
4000 Blk. Battlefield Blvd. S.
Chesapeake, VA 23322
Snacks, ramp, canoe put-in



©Dwight Dyke



©Dwight Dyke

For boaters, anglers and wildlife watchers the unique appeal of these rivers comes from the abundance of wildlife, majestic cypress trees and the unusually dark tannic waters.

The Northwest River has fewer brackish water species than the North Landing River. White perch and white catfish are not as common. Bluegill and pumpkinseed sunfish are abundant and different from in the North Landing River, redear sunfish (shellcrackers) are found here in fairly good numbers. The Northwest River also has some black crappie and chain pickerel, which prefer the darker, acidic water more prevalent here. The river is popular with bass anglers but may be best known for its nice size bluegill.

So next time you're planning a boating or fishing excursion, don't overlook these two rivers. There's plenty of water to explore and lots of variety as well. Canoeists can enjoy a relaxing day of easy paddling and fishing. Large boats are welcome too. □

Rick Eades is a fisheries biologist with the Department's Fisheries Division. Kris Dougherty is a game warden who works in the Virginia Beach area.

Northwest River Access

Indian Creek Road Chesapeake

Several access sites are located along Indian Creek Road off of Battlefield Boulevard South. Northwest River Park has canoe rentals and offers access to the river. Rented canoes are launched in the park lake and can be paddled 1.5 miles through the park canals towards the river. Canoes must then be carried a few hundred yards from the lake to the river. There are no boat ramps on the river in the park, but along Indian Creek Road; at each end of the park are access sites to Northwest River tributaries. The Indian Creek Bridge, on the west edge of the park, has limited parking, but small trailered boats can be launched here, and

canoes. This is a popular launch site for small boats. Indian Creek is fairly large and offers plenty of good angling for sunfish. On the eastern boundary of the park, the Smith Creek small boat put-in also provides access. It is located on Baum Road, an eighth of a mile from the intersection with Indian Creek Road. Both bridge access sites close at sunset.

Battlefield Boulevard South, Chesapeake.

Boat ramps on the Northwest River are located at Bob's Fishing



©Dwight Dyke

Hole and the Little Arrow Store, both in the 4000 block of South Battlefield Boulevard. This is where many of the bass boats are launched on the river. Canoes can be launched here as well. Snacks, drinks, bait, etc. are available.

Bunch Walnuts Road Bridge,
3400 Block Bunch Walnuts Road
Chesapeake

Further upstream on the river, this bridge crossing provides access for canoes or small "car-topper" boats, but parking is very limited.

North Landing River Access

There are several marinas on the North Landing River and its tributaries which provide access for boaters. Located far upstream on the Intracoastal Waterway, Centerville Waterway Marina (100 N. Centerville Turnpike, Chesapeake, (757) 482-1834) offers a ramp for larger

boats, gas, diesel, snacks and drinks. Further downriver, Pungo Ferry Marina (2272 Old Pungo Ferry Road, Virginia Beach, (757) 721-6569) also has a ramp, snacks, and bait. West Neck Marina at 3985 West Neck Road in Virginia Beach has a boat ramp, snacks, and bait. Canoes can be launched here as well.

Canoes and small car-topper boats can be launched at a few locations in Virginia Beach. Parking is generally very limited and there are no facilities at these sites. Dozier's Bridge, spanning West Neck Creek in the 2500 block of Princess Anne



Road, has a canoe put-in area, but limited parking. This is far upstream in a mostly swampy area. Speed's Bridge, also on West Neck Creek in the 2200 block of Indian River Road, has a canoe put-in area but limited parking. The Pocaty Creek Bridge, in the 4000 block of Blackwater Road, has a put-in for canoes and small trailered boats but has limited parking available. Canoes can be launched in the upper end of Milldam Creek in the 6100 block of Blackwater Road. Parking is limited here as well.

Blackwater Trading Post
5605 Blackwater Road
Virginia Beach.
(757) 421-2803.

The Blackwater Trading Post on Blackwater Road is, of course, next

to Blackwater Creek. The creek is well named. Much like the Northwest River, the water is dark, draining from swampy areas. Bluegill and pumpkinseed sunfish are the most common species here. The store has snacks, bait and sells fishing licenses. There's a canoe put-in as well as a boat ramp. There's plenty of water to explore upstream and downstream from the bridge. This is one of the larger tributaries of the North Landing River.

North Landing River
Nature Preserve
4800 Block Blackwater Road
Virginia Beach.

There's a parking lot here, but it's a half-mile hike down to the water to launch a canoe. If you're up to the

hike, there's plenty of water to explore in one of the river's larger tributaries.

Munden Point Park,
2001 Pefley Lane
Virginia Beach.

This City Park, far down Princess Anne Road towards North Carolina, has a wide paved ramp, picnic facilities, restrooms, etc. The river is at its widest here and the Intracoastal Waterway passes by the park. Water skiing is popular in this area as well, so there are some larger boats. For those unable to launch along Blackwater Road, crossing the river from Munden Point Park provides access to several of the western shore tributaries. The park closes at sunset.



©Dwight Dyke



I recommend a quality rod of 9, 9½, or even 10 feet, and prefer line weights of 5 or 6 for most of the time, and a 7 weight when heavy streamers are needed to entice the lunker brown and rainbow trout. Big nymphs and streamers are particularly effective when the water is cool and stained, such as from an early-spring freshet or mid-winter storm.

Since the deepest holes in Mossy Creek aren't much over waist deep, a floating line is all that's needed. Deeper presentations can be made by using weighted flies and/or adding split shot. In this type of fishing, use a strike indicator that will set the depth of the fly during its course, and also tell you when a fish has struck.

Leaders should range, depending on water clarity, from 9 to 12 feet and taper to tippet of from 3X to

Flies for All Seasons

Flies for Mossy range from large weighted streamers to tiny size 24 Tricos and midges, the latter two flies so small that a dozen or more would fit on your thumbnail. Tricos, a minuscule mayfly of the genus *Tricorythodes*, are often thick on Mossy Creek in the late spring and through the summer, and the big fish readily rise to these plentiful flies.

From November to March, when late fall passes to winter and then into very early spring, nymphs and streamers work the best. This is the only time of the year when you can fish subsurface without constantly hanging-up in the plentiful stream-bed vegetation. These are the months for the beadhead nymph, various caddis pupae, woolly buggers, marabou muddlers, and Clouser deep minnows.

In the middle of winter, it is not unusual for midges and caddisflies to hatch, particularly during a winter warm spell. When fishing Mossy Creek in the winter, have ready a few midge, caddis, and generic dry fly patterns and attractors, such as the Adams and Wulff-series.

Spring and early summer, from about late March through June, aquatic insect activity intensifies as the world awakens from the relative torpor of winter. First the little blue-winged olive and little black caddis, then the sulphurs, olive caddis, and, finally, the almost-microscopic tricos awaken on the creek bottom. They continue their life cycle to the stages that eventually releases them from the mud and rocks to the air, only to die and fall back upon the water that gave them birth. All the while during their dramatic life



7X—that's about 6.5 to 2.2 pound test—contingent on the conditions and situation. When fishing streamers or nymphs, leaders from 6 to 9 feet may be used.

It's important to remember that Mossy Creek is a very unique fishery and anglers should respect the special regulations regarding the use of this river.



cycle transformations, they provide a major source of food for the rainbow and brown trout.

In late spring, through the summer, and into early fall, terrestrial insects that live in and around the surrounding farm country become major sources of protein for Mossy's trout. Ants, beetles, grasshoppers, crickets, bees, wasps, and others join hexagenia mayflies, the tricos, slate drakes, and blue-winged olives in the ample larder. The trout have an insect smorgasbord that keeps them looking up, with a wary eye toward overhead predators such as herons, ospreys, kingfishers, and fly anglers, the latter waving long sticks with brightly-colored lines.

Carry your full complement of dry fly and terrestrial boxes when you come to Mossy Creek; there's a good chance you could use all the flies you brought!

Tactics for Trophy Trout

Current, water clarity, and vegetation are important factors to consider, along with insect activity, when presenting a fly to Mossy's trout. Vegetation, both in the stream and on the banks, will snag your fly on either the back cast, forward cast, or during the drift.

I'll never forget the time this past spring when fishing guide Billy Kingsley, co-owner of the Blue Ridge Angler fly shop in Harrisonburg, attempted to show my friends Amy and Elizabeth and me how to properly fish Mossy after rain showers had raised and discolored the water. He tied on a weighted black woolly bugger, added a putty-style strike indicator about 5 or 6 feet above the fly, and made a short cast quartering upstream. "Now, keep a tight line and, with the rod held high, lead the strike indicator as it moves downstream." But during the "demonstration" cast, Billy hooked a 17-inch brown followed by a rainbow nearly as large when he tried to demonstrate again! He never did finish his schooling, but we managed to catch some nice fish following his advice, despite the interruptions.

Billy is one of several guides who not only guide on the public stretch of Mossy Creek but also have fishing rights on several miles of the creek on private property. Billy, a graduate of nearby James Madison, has a masters degree in aquatic entomology, and did much of his research on Mossy and other streams in the area.

Fishing with dry flies and floating terrestrial fly patterns is, in my opinion, the most challenging and the most fun. In clear water with numerous current breaks, it is particularly difficult to present a fly on a drag-free drift over the fish-holding lies where trout wait in ambush for whatever morsel happens by.

Generally, there are two ways to present a dry fly to rising trout in quiet water where no hatch or spinner fall is occurring but where fish should be located. One is to cast upstream or upstream and slightly across current, and the other is to cast downstream.

The upstream approaches have the advantage of being easier to control and drag as obviated by stripping line commensurate with the current speed. This allows the line to remain tighter and setting the hook, by raising the rod tip, is quicker and easier than it is when slack line is present.

Another advantage is that the fish face into the current; so if you approach your casting position slowly and quietly you will be positioned behind the trout where they can't see you. The major disadvantage to an upstream presentation, particularly since you are not allowed to wade in the public access part of the stream, is that the leader and line can spook the fish when they land on the water. Not being able to wade limits your angle of presentation, so "lining" fish is always possible.

Sometimes the terrain and situation require a downstream-and-across presentation, throwing controlled slack in the line with various in-air mends, such as the pile and reach casts. The slack in the line allows a drag-free drift of the fly, but means you must react very quickly and firmly to a strike.

Don't neglect to fish the bank on which you are standing; fish aren't always located on the other side. Work the deep side of patches of vegetation, and always work undercut banks, particularly those with some overhead cover provided by trees or bushes. Look for edges and current breaks and swing a fly by them.

Walk softly, be observant, cast long and accurate, and you'll probably catch some of Mossy's legendary trout. Mossy Creek is a Virginia treasure, a beautiful, unique, and challenging stream that is fun to fish. While fishing, stop now and then and look around. The pastoral setting, the living water, the puffy white clouds on a cobalt sky, all form the essence of the day. Take a breath, sigh deeply, relax, and remember that the lower your heart rate, the more fish you'll probably catch. □

Freelance writer King Montgomery is a frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife. He lives in Annandale.

Trout Unlimited's mission is to conserve, protect, and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. TU is a non-profit organization with 100,000 members in 455 chapters nationwide. For information, call (703) 522-0200 or visit their web site at <http://www.tu.org>.

Mossy Creek Guides

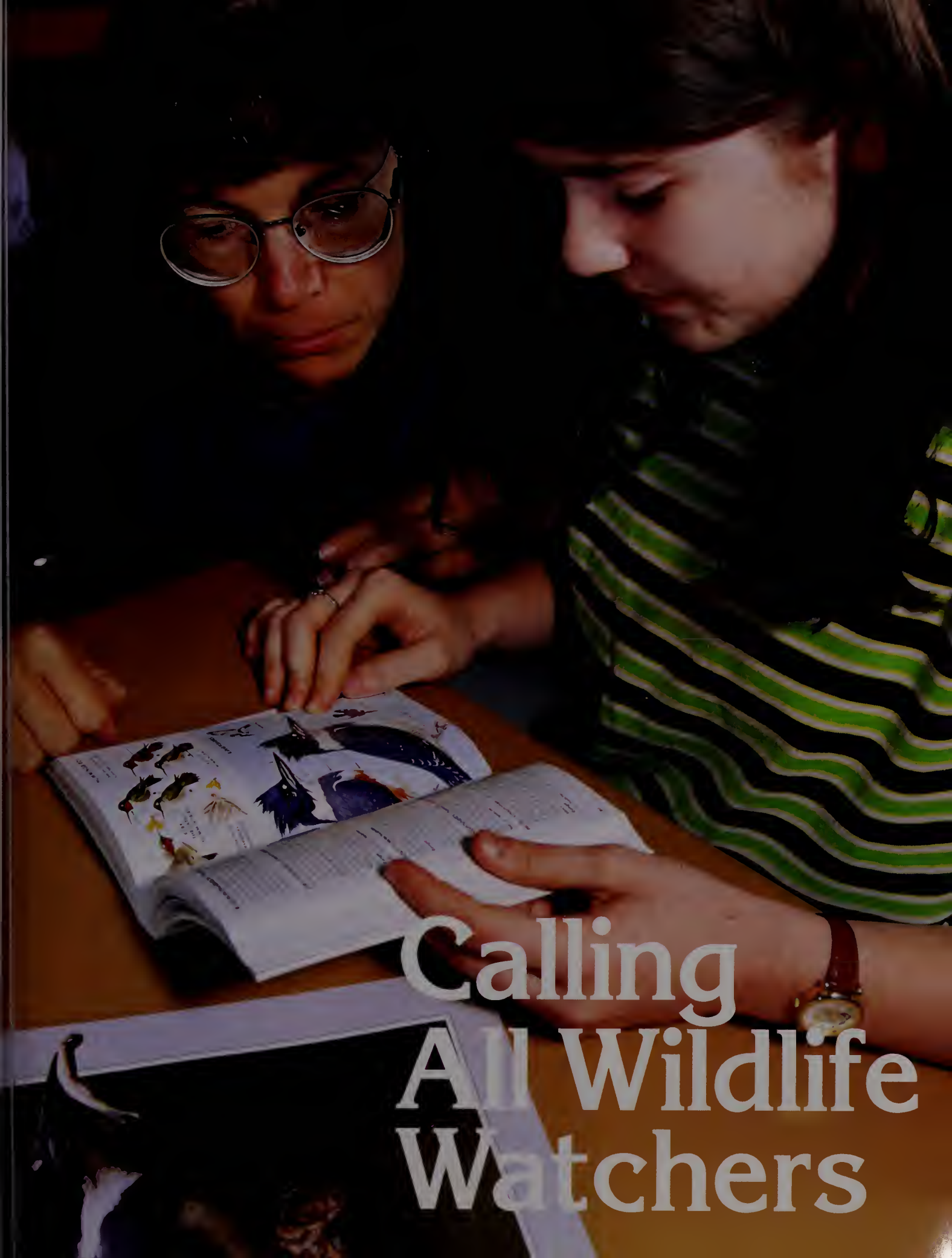
Several guides work the public access sector and have fishing rights on other private waters:

Billy Kingsley, the Blue Ridge Angler fly shop & guide service in Harrisonburg. 1-800-304-8675.

Bob Cramer, fly fishing Orvis-endorsed guide and instructor. (540) 867-9310.

Harry Murray, Murray's Fly Shop in Edinburg. (540) 984-4212.

Jim Finn, Mossy Creek Fly Shop in Bridgewater. 1-800-646-2168.



Calling All Wildlife Watchers



Sharp eyes and a quick pen will help us all to better understand our natural world.



by Lisa Sausville

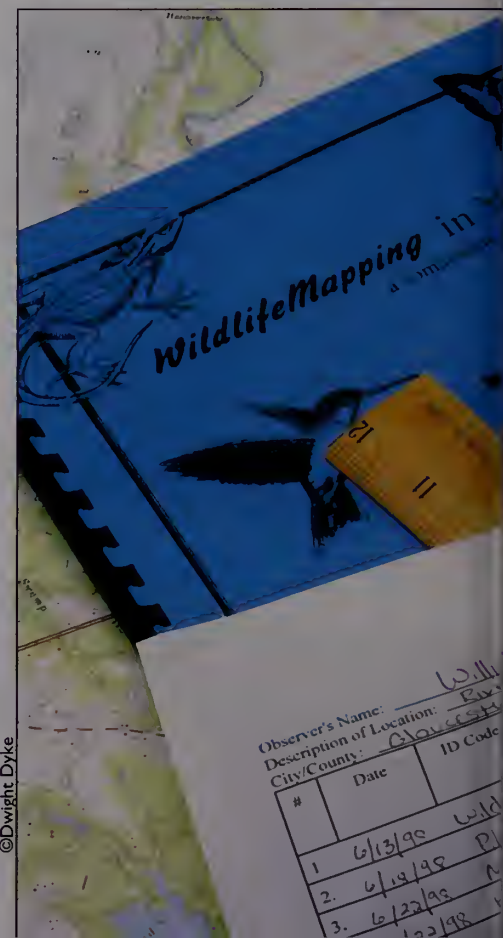
Do you enjoy watching birds while hiking or canoeing? Do you watch the squirrels and other wildlife from your tree stand or favorite fishing hole? Do you enjoy attracting wildlife to your backyard through plantings? Then *WildlifeMapping* is for you!

Wildlife viewing has become a popular sport throughout the country. Virginia offers many wonderful places to participate in this activity, whether you are alone or on a team, on the trail or in your own backyard. These wildlife observations are not only exciting for you as an observer but also contain valuable information. Everyone collects data when they are watching wildlife, but they may not realize the importance of

Susan Walton, who teaches at Teasley Middle School in Gloucester, has found students very enthusiastic about participating in the WildlifeMapping Program since it was introduced into many of Virginia's classrooms.

their observation or write the information down. *WildlifeMapping* is an outreach program sponsored by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) that provides a mechanism for these observations to be collected and used by individuals, schools, communities, and our agency.

The Department maintains a comprehensive, computerized system to help manage Virginia's wildlife resources. Information collected by WildlifeMappers will supplement these datasets and will be maintained as one of the layers. The information will assist us in determining where species occur, fill in





"gaps," provide a basis for student research, and help keep common animals common. There are not enough resource professionals to do a complete wildlife inventory of the state. This is where you can help!

So what do you have to do? First, observe wildlife. We are currently collecting information on observations of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies, and fishes from WildlifeMappers. You don't need to be an expert to participate. Remember, even the professionals had training at one time. You can always record an observation as "questionable" if you are unsure of it. Take your time and focus on a few common species you see in your backyard. As time passes, you will notice your identification skills im-

proving. Use field guides and binoculars to assist you in the identification process. A camera is also useful in documenting what you have seen. If you like birds, try listening to bird song identification tapes to sharpen your birding skills. You don't have to report everything you see unless it interests you. If you're keen on mammals or amphibians focus your observations on those critters.

Once you have identified the animal in question, we want you to tell us about the area in which you saw it. There are nine basic habitats that have been defined for Virginia, with options to clarify the specific habitat type. The "dominant habitat" is defined as an area based on the size of a football field. Smaller habitats within the dominant habitat, such as a creek flowing through, may be defined as the "secondary habitat."

The next step is to determine where you are. Knowing where you are just as important as identifying the wildlife you observe. To be the most useful, we need to know more than your address or which county you are in. We use latitude and longitude coordinates to accurately pinpoint observations. This can be determined from topographic maps

or by using a global positioning system (GPS) unit. After collecting the details about the observation, you enter the data into the *WildlifeMapping* database. If you do not have access to a computer you can submit your information by completing the *WildlifeMapping* data form. Soon you will be able to submit observations via the Internet.

Does all this seem overwhelming? Not to worry! All of these concepts are covered at a one-day re-

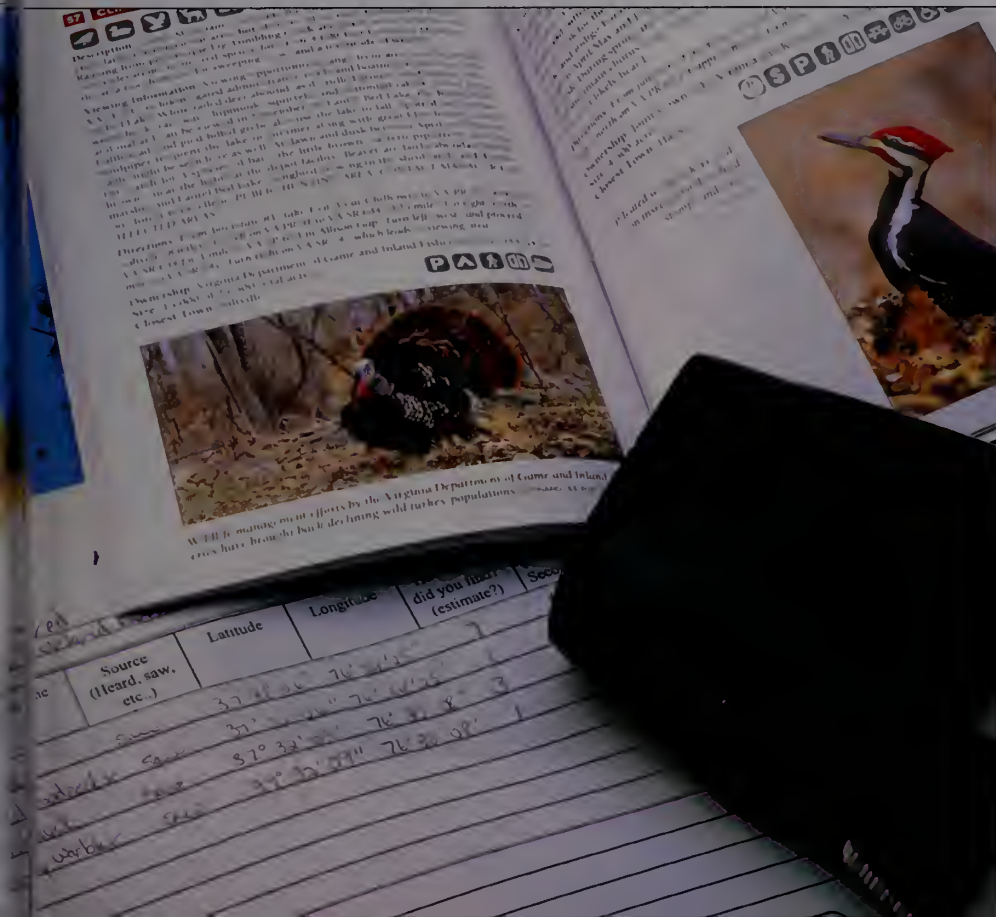


©Dwight Dyke

You don't need to be an expert to participate, and it's important to remember that the data collected will play an important roll in monitoring the wide diversity of species in Virginia.

WildlifeMapping Guiding Principles

1. Provide distributional data on a variety of species.
2. Promote public involvement in the management of our states wildlife resources.
3. Educate the public about the wildlife resources of the Commonwealth.
4. Complement survey, monitoring and research efforts in the Commonwealth.

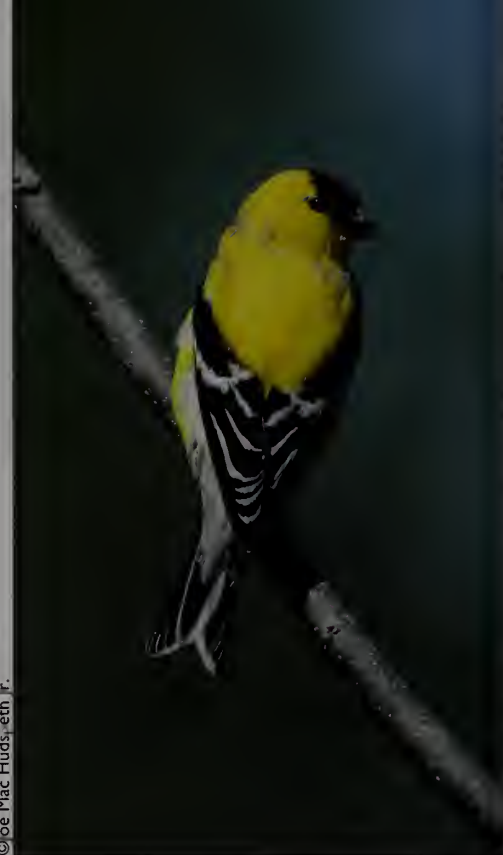


quired *WildlifeMapping* workshop. Participants are trained to collect key pieces of information about their observations. During the day, we talk about species identification techniques, habitat classification and how to determine the latitude and longitude of your site. Everyone is trained to report their observations in a standard way. An observer can always collect more data than is requested but must collect the key components needed for the database.

The program not only offers participants an opportunity to share their wildlife observations with the Department; it also provides them with a forum to "Ask the Expert." Each month, a Department biologist is featured on our web page and answers questions on a particular topic. This month, we are featuring Dr. Gary Costanzo, DGIF waterfowl research biologist, who will answer questions about waterfowl. We accept questions through e-mail during the first two weeks of each month. The answers are posted during the next month. Other exciting

components of the *WildlifeMapping* web page include the featured species, frequently asked questions and other related links. Upcoming workshop dates are also posted here.

This program is also being integrated into Virginia classrooms. This initiative is very exciting because students collect real data that are being used in a statewide database. It assists educators in meeting many of Virginia's Standards of Learning and can be applied to science, math, geography, language arts, and technology. *WildlifeMapping* has been implemented successfully in a number of Virginia schools where each teacher finds new and innovative ways to use it. Cathy Ney, a teacher at Christiansburg Elementary School, in Montgomery County, has formed an alliance with nearby university students to assist her with teaching species identification techniques to fourth and fifth graders. The class has gone on field trips, involved their parents, and created their own web page. Susan Walton's students,



© Bob Mac Huds, eth Jr.

(Above) This American goldfinch is just one of the many birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies, and fish that will be recorded by *WildlifeMappers*.



© Dwight Dyke

at Peasley Middle School in Gloucester County, are *WildlifeMapping* around their school grounds. They are documenting species that occur along their nature trail in order to create a trail brochure. The students become very enthusiastic about the projects as they see their efforts take on a new meaning. The projects become much more than a classroom assignment.

This program provides an exciting opportunity for the citizens of the Commonwealth to get involved in watching and recording wildlife. From child to adult, from the backyard to the mountaintop, Virginians can play a critical role in monitoring species diversity. If you are interested in becoming a WildlifeMapper, check out our web site (<http://www.dgif.state.va.us>) for the next workshop near you or call WildlifeMapping Coordinator Lisa Sausville at (804) 367-8747. □

Lisa Sausville is a wildlife biologist with the Department's Wildlife Information and Enhancement Section.

Resource Guide: A Helper in the Field

Is it a junco or a titmouse? Is it a mole or a vole? Could you answer these questions? If so, maybe you could be a *WildlifeMapping* Resource Guide! Many *WildlifeMapping* leaders may not feel comfortable with the details associated with identifying wildlife in the field. This is where the Resource Guides program comes in to play. It gives WildlifeMappers an opportunity to receive assistance from individuals with an expertise in identifying wildlife seen in the field, or provide tips on improved viewing opportunities.

Individuals chosen for the Resource Guides Program will be selected through an application process, and receive training and supplies. Their names will be featured in a directory used to match Resource Guides to WildlifeMappers. The Resource Guides can share their wisdom and experience by assisting

with the use of field guides or other identification methods, such as songs or calls, confirming sightings, giving presentations on particular species of interest, or assisting with computer applications for *WildlifeMapping* data entry.

Through hands-on discovery and practice in the field with Resource Guides, WildlifeMappers can learn life-long skills and gain confidence in species identification. This is an opportunity to share with others the joy of observing wildlife, teach respect for the environment, and share your wildlife knowledge with those who are eager to better understand the natural world around them.

If you are interested in receiving an application to become a *WildlifeMapping* Resource Guide, contact Karen Reay, *WildlifeMapping* Assistant Coordinator, P.O. Box 11104, 4010 W. Broad St., Richmond, VA 23230-1104, Phone: (804) 367-2733, email: kreay@dgif.state.va.us





Journal

Michael Presgraves' Boone & Crockett Bear

by David Hart

If it wasn't for his uncle's persistence, Michael Presgraves might have gone back to his deer stand on the afternoon of November 28, 1997. Instead, Presgraves, traded his deer rifle for something larger and went after bear.

The Luray resident, along with his father and uncle, traveled over the mountain to an abandoned apple orchard just south of Sperryville in Rappahannock County. The 100-acre parcel of land lay within a few hundred feet of the border of the Shenandoah National Park, prime bear country.

Soon after the three hunters split up for the evening, Presgraves realized a big bear had been visiting the orchard regularly. Huge piles of droppings littered the ground among the trees and several sets of large tracks along a muddy creek bank told him he was in the right place. About 45 minutes after he sat

down near those tracks, movement on the ridge above him confirmed his belief.

"I knew it was a bear," recalled the 37-year old Virginia Department of Transportation crew member, "but as fast as I saw him he was gone."

Presgraves thought the bruin winded him and decided to head back into the park, but a few minutes later, the big boar appeared only 75 yards away and was closing the distance.

"I couldn't believe my eyes. I thought it was a Black Angus steer coming through the woods, he was so big," he said.

A single shot at 45 yards from his .338 Winchester Magnum dropped the animal in its tracks. It turned out to be the largest bear killed in the state in 1997 and the fifth largest on record, based on Boone & Crockett scoring methods.

The bear weighed 456 pounds field dressed and scored 21 3/16. According to biologist Jerry Blanks, it was 18 years old. □

Fly Fishing Clinics at Northwest River Park

The Bill Wills Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the Virginia Coastal Fly Anglers along with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries are teaming up to host a series of half-day fly fishing clinics at Northwest River Park in Chesapeake. The free clinics are scheduled on the first Saturday of each month, October through March (January's clinic will be held on the 9th, due to the New Year's holiday).

Each clinic will be held 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and topics include a review of basic equipment, casting a fly rod and fly tying. All equipment will be provided and participants can take home the fly they create.

If you already fly fish, chapter members will be available to answer your questions following the clinic. Live fishing in the park's stocked pond is also available for anglers possessing a current Virginia freshwater license, a Virginia trout license and their own fishing equipment. For more information, contact one of the following numbers:

Bill Campbell, TU
(757) 499-1172

Northwest River Park
(757) 421-7151

VDGIF Suffolk Office
(757) 255-0523

"A Guide to Endangered and Threatened Species in Virginia"

A Guide to Endangered and Threatened Species in Virginia is an abridged and updated version of the award-



©David Hart



winning publication *Virginia's Endangered Species* (1991). A general introduction summarizes Virginia's natural habitats, conservation laws, and the responsibilities of the various state agencies involved in the conservation of biotic diversity in the Commonwealth. Most of the book consists of one-page descriptions and discussions of those species of plant and animal that are officially listed as endangered or threatened in Virginia. A beautiful color photograph is provided for almost every species.

This Guide is substantive, and is written in a style and format that will be enjoyed and understood by both professionals and laypersons. Its size, conciseness, and price make it an especially versatile, accessible, and useable reference and field tool for all who are interested in understanding and protecting Virginia's vulnerable natural heritage.

The entries in this Guide are condensed from more complete accounts prepared by more than 80 biologists from throughout Virginia. It contains the most current information available in printed form on the subject of vulnerable species in Virginia.

A Guide to Virginia's Endangered Species: 1995. x + 200 pp.; 135 color photographs, 140 color maps, 14 b/w figures, 6 appendixes, index.. Paper (0-939923-31-9) \$14.95.

Royalties from the sale of this book go to the VDGIF Nongame and Endangered Species Fund.

To order call: The McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company
1-800-233-8787. Credit cards accepted. □

The 6th Annual Eastern Shore Birding Festival

by Emily M. Grey

Imagine thousands of migrating neotropical songbirds and raptors lighting up the autumn sky. Excited beginners, advanced birders and other curious onlookers don binoculars and head to private, state and federal venues to witness the spectacular sight. Visitors board canoes, bicycles, motorized vehicles and journey on foot through some of Virginia's wildest country.

In the spirit of protecting avian species and their vital habitats and promoting the local economy through responsible nature tourism, the Eastern Shore Birding Festival was born. The funneled tip of the Delmarva Peninsula draws in numerous avifauna. They stage, feed and rest before crossing the 18-mile Chesapeake Bay en route to a milder winter climate.

This year's celebration will occur October 9th, 10th and 11th. A wonderful welcome party with scrumptious food and beverages will take place Friday at Cape Charles Harbor. Local art displays, bird banding and stimulating family workshops will transpire near the Sunset Beach Inn area.

Kenn Kaufman, a naturalist, teacher and artist, will be the guest speaker on Friday evening. An elective member of the American Ornithologists' Union, Kaufman wrote Kingbird Highway and the video version of Roger Tory Peterson's *North American Birds*.

Plan to attend this inspiring event in one of the nation's birding hot spots. Contact:

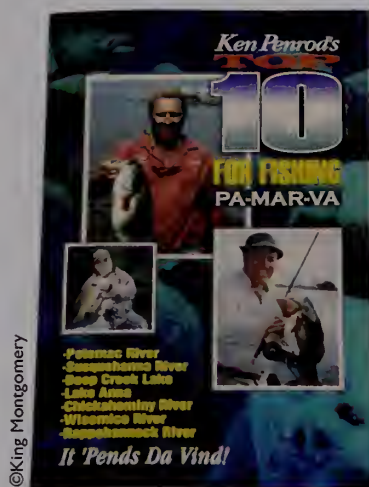
The Eastern Shore of Virginia
Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 460
Melfa, VA 23410
(757) 787-2460

esvachamber@esva.net
web site: <http://www.esva.net/~esvachamber> or
www.esva.net/~esvatourism

Ten Best Fishing Spots

by King Montgomery

Top 10 for Fishing: PA-MAR-VA,
PPC Publications,
1998, softcover, 171 pages,
\$24.00.



Noted fishing guide and author, Ken Penrod talks about his 10 favorite fishing holes in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. He has fished and guided on many of these waters for years, and now he shares his favorite spots with readers.

The Virginia hotspots include the Chickahominy River, the tidal Rappahannock River near Port Royal, and Lake Anna. The other waters covered are Pennsylvania's Susquehanna River and Maryland's Smoot's Bay, Mattawoman Creek, and Charles County striper hotspots on the tidal Potomac River and Maryland's Wicomico River, Deep Creek Lake, and the upper Potomac River.

Penrod locates and describes each fishing spot, and tells us where to go, what tackle to use, and he outlines seasonal patterns for the various gamefish. The emphasis of the book is on largemouth black bass, smallmouth black bass, and in the Charles County, MD, stretch of the

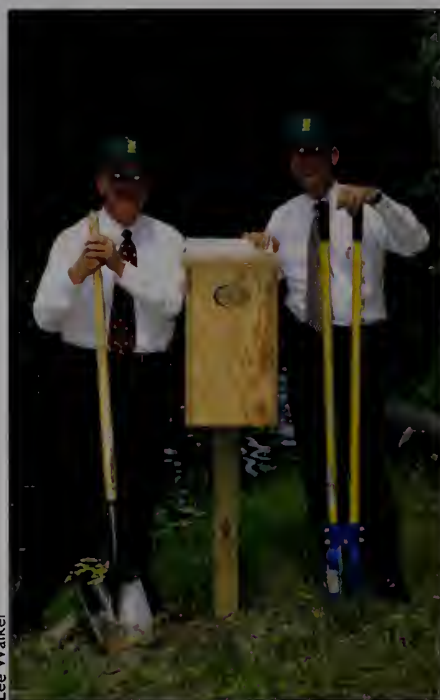
tidal Potomac River, the striped bass. He does address panfish and catfish, as well.

For more information or to order a book, call PPC Publications at (301) 937-0010. □

Joining Forces to Promote Waterfowl Habitat

The Department of Correctional Education (DCE) is collaborating with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to provide incarcerated students with a unique educational opportunity. In a hands-on project, which will promote their woodworking skills, DCE vocational students have built wood duck nesting boxes to promote the Commonwealth's wildlife habitat.

The students have built more than 90 nesting boxes which have been distributed across the state. They will primarily be used in Vir-



Lee Walker

(L to r) Secretary of Public Safety, Gary K. Aronhalt and Secretary of Natural Resources, John P. Woodley, Jr. unite to help promote waterfowl habitat in Virginia.

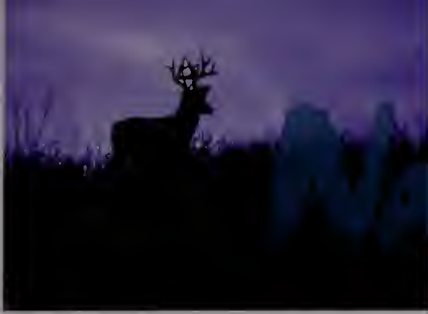
ginia's state parks and natural areas managed by DCR. "This project with the Public Safety Secretariat assists the Natural Resources Secretariat with its mission to conserve our natural resources," said the Secretary of Natural Resources, John Paul Woodley, Jr. "We look forward to continuing this partnership, and improving waterfowl habitat across the state."

DCE provides appropriate educational opportunities for adults and youth incarcerated in Virginia. The programs provide an array of academic and vocational offerings, including woodworking and sheet metal. In DCE's mission of "Fighting Crime Through Education," the agency continuously seeks new and productive ways to accomplish its goals. "Building nesting boxes allows DCE to achieve its mission by providing positive, real-world experience for inmates and it gives the Commonwealth the added benefits of preserving and promoting wildlife habitat," said Gary K. Aronhalt, Secretary of Public Safety. □

National Hunting and Fishing Day September 26, 1998

*"A Natural Invitation
to Step Outdoors"*

©Dwight Dyke



Naturally Wild

by Spike Knuth



Eastern Hermit Thrush

Picture yourself walking alongside a gurgling, rocky stream, hedged by a quiet, shaded woodlands. Long fronds of hemlocks drape over the riffles and rocks. The understory is carpeted with ferns. From a distant thicket you hear a stirring, flute-like call, the strains of which have an almost mystical quality. The eastern hermit thrush is arguably the best of all bird vocalists. One of its other names is American nightingale! Among its other names are swamp angel and solitary thrush.

The hermit thrush is so-called because it is usually seen alone. It tends to be secretive and quiet when you enter "its" woods. Yet, at the same time it is a curious bird and it will tag along or fly ahead, often circling you, staying close to the

ground and uttering a quiet "chuck" call as it studies you. Sometimes it finds a sheltered hiding spot to just watch and often even allows you to get quite close.

The hermit thrush lives in a variety of habitats, from wet, dense woodlands, to wooded swamps, mixed woodlands of hardwoods, hemlock and pine, and cut-overs with new thick stands of brush growing up.

The best field mark of the hermit thrush is its reddish-brown tail, which it jerks upward and slowly lowers when disturbed. Its upperparts are basically brown, underparts a buffy-white with streaks and spots, and it has a dull white but conspicuous eye ring.

The hermit thrush is the hardest of the thrushes, not counting its

robins and bluebird cousins. It arrives in March and departs as late as November, although, some may stay the winter in Virginia. They nest on or near the ground, building a cup of plant fibers, leaves and moss. Its main food in spring and summer consists of worms, beetles, caterpillars, ants and other insects, which it gets by digging in the forest humus. In fall and winter it turns to the wide array of wild berries and fruits that are available, including poison ivy, serviceberry, holly, and juniper.

The hermit thrush can be found from the deep hemlock woodlands of the western mountains of Virginia, to the brushy thickets of the hollows and ridges of the foothills in Patrick County to the swamps of southeastern Virginia. Its song is a wonder to hear. □





On The Water

by Kathy Gillikin, Boating Education Instructor

The ResQ Disc™

If you haven't seen this handy device yet, you will. Dr. Thomas Sytko designed a great way to rescue someone, and it's as easy as throwing a frisbee. The 12 inch disc is a bright orange plastic disc with about 100 feet of polypropylene line wound around it, much like a yo-yo, and secured with a Velcro strip. As all boaters know, polypropylene line floats which helps the victims see the line in the water. The disc floats as well, and provides five pounds of flotation.

To use the disc in a rescue, the rescuer would let out about 20 feet of line for slack and hurl the ResQ Disc™ beyond the victim, being sure not to hit the victim in the process. Since the disc is bright orange, and the polypropylene line is bright yellow,

it is easy for the victim to see (and hopefully get to) the line, even if the disc did not go right to the person. Once the victim has a hold on the line, the rescuer would pull the line in hand over hand. The line will support 600 pounds. In addition to being easy to throw, the buoyancy and bright colors are the greatest advantages of the ResQ Disc™. Seven people have already been saved with this product.

This product is great! The main disadvantage of the disc is that the weight of the disc could cause harm to a victim if hit with the disc during rescue. The rescuer must throw the disc beyond the victim and then pull the disc to the person. Another disadvantage is that in throwing the disc beyond the victim, there may be quite a delay before the victim may hold the disc. As you can see, the ad-

vantages of the ResQ Disc™ far outweigh the disadvantages.

The ResQ Disc™ costs about \$25-\$30 and is available in different sizes. If you would like to order one or would like more information, please E-mail RESQDISC@AOL.COM or call (813) 906.0148. The ResQ Disc™ is also available in marine supply stores nationwide.

Courtesy

Okay, how long has it been since you took a boating safety course? For most boaters it has been a while. From time to time, it is a good idea to review the navigation rules, such as all boaters should keep to the right, the boat on the right or the boat with the least maneuverability has the right-of-way, boats being passed have the right-of-way, etc. Courtesy is another story altogether.

Courtesy involves going beyond the straight forward navigation rules. Showing courtesy on the water means being a defensive operator and allowing a boat racing with you to "win". Courtesy means not intimidating or spraying other boaters, but giving them ample space on the water; space means more time to react. Courtesy means preparing your boat for launching *before* your turn at the boat ramp. Courtesy means helping to keep our waters clean for future generations by depositing your trash in shore waste disposals. Courtesy is being considerate of the other water enthusiasts and not being selfish. Why not do your part to become a courteous boater? Show others that you know the navigation rules *and* that you have advanced beyond the basic rules to being a courteous boater. □



RECIPES

by Joan Cone

Chukars For Shooting And Eating

Now that September is here, you and your dog can prepare for the coming upland season with preserve shooting for chukars. As they sit tightly, chukars are excellent birds for dog training.

These partridge-size birds average 10 to 14 ounces each. Found wild in high mountains with little moisture, chukars tend to be dry. To guarantee moist, tender eating, use your crockpot, Dutch oven or pressure cooker.

Menu

Chukar In Red Wine
Dijon Scalloped Potatoes
Delicious Green Beans
Apple Strudel Wrap

Chukar in Red Wine

- 1/2 pound zucchini, sliced 1/4-inch thick
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 chukars, dressed and split down back
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 ounces button or small whole mushrooms
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup red table wine
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

Place sliced zucchini in bottom of crockpot. Heat butter in a large skillet and brown chukar halves. Drain birds and place in crockpot over zucchini. Saute the onion and mushrooms in skillet and place over birds. Add salt, pepper and wine. Cover and cook on LOW heat for 8 to 9 hours or 4 to 5 hours on HIGH or

until meat is fork tender. To thicken sauce, dissolve cornstarch in small amount of water and stir slowly into hot liquid until desired consistency is reached. Allow 1/2 chukar per serving.

Dijon Scalloped Potatoes

- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1/2 cup Dijon mustard
- 4 medium baking potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup shredded Swiss cheese

In medium saucepan, over medium heat, cook onion in butter or margarine until tender. Stir in flour and cook for 2 minutes. Slowly stir in milk. Cook and stir for 3 to 5 minutes more or until mixture thickens. Stir in mustard and heat through. In a greased 2-quart casserole dish, alternately layer potatoes and mustard mixture. Cover and bake at 375° F for 1 hour. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, for 10 to 15 minutes more or until potatoes are tender and cheese is melted. Makes 4 servings.

Delicious Green Beans

- 1 pound fresh green beans
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons dried dillweed
- 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Trim ends from beans and discard. Cut beans into 1-inch pieces. Bring 1-inch deep water to boil in a

saucepan and add beans. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes or until crisp-tender. Whisk oil and next 4 ingredients. Toss with beans just before serving. Makes 4 servings.

Apple Strudel Wrap

- 1/2 package Pepperidge Farm frozen Puff Pastry Sheets (1 sheet), thawed
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tablespoon water
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 large Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons raisins

Thaw pastry sheet at room temperature 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 375° F. Mix egg and water and set aside. Mix sugar, flour and cinnamon. Add apples and raisins and toss to coat. Set aside. Unfold pastry on lightly floured surface. Roll into a 16 x 12-inch rectangle. With short side facing you, spoon apple mixture on bottom half of pastry to within 1 inch of edges. Starting at short side, roll up like a jelly roll. Place seam-side down on baking sheet. Tuck ends under to seal. Brush with egg mixture. Cut several 2-inch slits 2 inches apart on top. Bake 35 minutes or until golden. Cool on baking sheet or wire rack about 30 minutes before serving. Slice and serve warm. If desired, sprinkle with confectioners sugar. Makes 6 servings. □

September Afield

by Jack Randolph

For the sportsman September is an exciting month, one that holds something for everyone. Of course, this is the month when the children return to school and the vacation season ends, but September is full of beginnings, too.

Hunters look forward to September for the opening of the squirrel, dove, rail, and resident Canada goose seasons. It is also the month for buying waterfowl blind licenses and for scouting for deer in preparation for the bowhunting season next month.

This year hunters have a new chore. If they intend to hunt for any migratory game birds, including resident geese, other waterfowl, doves, rails, woodcocks or snipe they must obtain a Harvest Information Program (HIP) number. The number is easy to obtain and its free. The number simply serves as a way to count hunters who hunt migratory species and assists in gathering harvest information. The HIP number must be annotated on your hunting license in the block provided. To obtain your number simply call 1-800-WETLAND (938-5263). You can call at anytime.

Another task that may face some younger hunters is attending a Hunting Education Course. Actually, this is more like fun than work and it is mandatory if you are a first timer who wants to hunt this season. It's smart to enroll as early as possible to avoid disappointment later.

Although September is still essentially a summer month the days have been growing shorter since the first day of summer and these shorter days begin to trigger certain instincts in wild things.

In the bay and the ocean, where many of our fish are only summer visitors, the shorter days begin to

trigger that urge to start moving towards their winter quarters. The shorter days can also whet appetites as freshwater fish commence feeding in preparation for the slower days of winter. Of course, deer find fall to be a romantic time of the year and their instincts commence to turn in that direction.

Most notably in September we will see croakers take on a yellow sheen as they prepare to spawn and commence their autumn exodus and cobia are practically history before the month is half through. Speckled trout come to life this month and bluefish congregate into great schools in the upper reaches of Virginia's Chesapeake Bay. Spot are now in their golden spawning colors and are about as large as they will be this year. The big show, however, is offshore where the white marlin are ganging up and balling bait, offering the most exciting offshore fishing of the season.

This is also a month to keep track of the various hunts offered by the VDGIF, State Parks, Division of Forestry and the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service. Hunters can apply for a day in a VDGIF duck blind or a chance to hunt deer on a federal or state refuge or in a State Forest or on a State Park. Handicapped hunters are also offered opportunities.

September is a good month for freshwater fishermen, too. It's a particularly good one for smallmouth bass fishermen if the aquatic vegetation in the rivers is not too heavy. Later, as the leaves commence falling fishing the freshwater rivers becomes more difficult.

In the tidal rivers blue catfish will continue to provide heavyweight battles this month and the flatheads are still active in the James and Staunton rivers. The sunfish, bluegills and shellcrackers will be getting in their last licks before going deeper and crappie will be showing the first signs opening up for the autumn season. Landlocked stripers should also provide plenty of action.

Although September catches us thinking of autumn, it is still essentially a summer month—but it is the last one for awhile. □



©Bill Lea

Virginia Wildlife
Calendar
1998-1999

©Scotty Lovett

©Leonard Lee Rue III

©Maslowski Photo

©Steve Maslowski

©M.L. Giovannetti

Want To Get Really Wild?

Order your 1998-1999 Virginia Wildlife Calendar!

If you're looking for information on hunting, fishing and the outdoors then you'll want to order the new 1998-1999 Virginia Wildlife Calendar.

Whether it's finding out when bald eagles gather on the James River, or when deer lose their antlers, the Virginia Wildlife Calendar helps put the wild back into wildlife. No other calendar gives you so much for so little. Interesting facts, special events, award-winning photography, natural history of animals in Virginia, plus a guide to knowing the best times to hunt, fish and watch wildlife.

Remember our special 1998-1999 Virginia Wildlife Calendar starts in September and runs through next August. So, hurry! Supplies are limited.

At only \$6.50 each, you'll want them for your home, office, friends and relatives.

Order yours today! See the gray order card inside for details.

Answer the Call of the Wild



Answer the call of the wild with a turkey license plate, the latest addition to Virginia's series of wildlife conservationist license plates. For every set of plates you buy, \$15 goes to Virginia's wildlife management and research programs.

Visit your local DMV customer service center and order one of these plates. Largemouth bass, mallard duck, brook trout and white-tailed deer are also available.

So heed the call of the wild and get your turkey plate today.

